

**A STUDY OF NARASIMHA CULT  
IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE**

*A thesis submitted to Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati  
For the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
SANSKRIT**

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**2010**

# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled " **A study of Narasimha Cult in Sanskrit Literature**" by K. Venkata Krishna is a record of research work for the award of degree Ph.D done by the candidate during the period of his research under my direction and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree of diploma or associateship or fellowship or other similar title.

Place: Tirupati

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**A study of Narasimha Cult in Sanskrit Literature**” has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. K. Pratap, Dept. of Sanskrit and my Research Supervisor for suggesting this topic and there by introducing me to the agama literature and also for his continuous co-operation, which facilitated me to complete my research. I also thank all the staff members of the Department of Sanskrit, S.V.U College of Arts, S.V. University, Tirupati.

My thanks are due to the authorities of S.V. Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati, Rasthriya Samkruta Visvavidyalaya, Tirupati, A.P. Oriental Manuscript Institute, Hyderabad and the Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai for allowing me to collect material from their institutions.

I wish you thank Dr. P. Vijaya Lakshmi Devi, Principal, and the Staff P.S. Govt. Degree, Penukonda, Anantapur District for their unending cooperation, while I am doing research.

My thanks for also due to M/s. Classic Xerox, Hyderabad and M/s Vinay Graphics, Tirupati for their help rendered to carryout the Typing and Binding of my Research Work.

Last but not least, I feel proud of my Daughters Ms. Savita and Ms. Krishnaveni for their care and concern through out and I am happy that I could fulfil the long felt desire of my Late wife Mrs. Padma, whom I feel is my guiding force behind to complete my research work, though she is not physically present.

**(K. VENKATA KRISHNA)**

## ABBREVIATIONS

Ap	: Appendix
Brahmanda. P	: Brahamandapurana
HDS	: History of Dharma Sastra
H.S	: Hayasirshasamhita
M. Bh	: Mahabharata
M.P	: Matsyapurana
P.S	: Padmasamhita
S.S	: Sattvatamhita
Vayu . P	: Vayupurana
V.D.P	: Vishnudharmottarapurana
Viha. S	: Vihagendasamhita
Vishnu. P	: Vishnupurana
V.T.	: Vishnutantra

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

The concepts of Gods and Goddesses have played a pivotal role in moulding the civilizations, the traditions and customs of a society in any religion in general and Hinduism in particular. The first ever religious documents available in the world are the Vedas of the Hinduism. The prominence of Vedic deities like Indra, Varuna, Mitra etc. were relegated to background by the advent of the concept of *Trimurti* (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) in the literature of *Puranas* and Epics in Indian tradition.

The concept of '*avatara*'<sup>1</sup> is one of the oldest and significant topics of the Hindu mythology. Any devotee being taking a form and descending on the earth to serve a particular purpose is called *avatara*. But the term *avatara* is confined to the manifestations or incarnations of Vishnu in general usage.

The *puranas*, while explaining of the process of creation describe vividly the various incarnations of Vishnu. This description has become one of the five characteristics of a *purana*,<sup>2</sup> the others being 1) Destruction, 2) Cycle of time. 3) Genealogy and 4) Royal dynasties. It is believed that the Vyasa was the author of eighteen *Mahapuranas* and eighteen *Upapuranas*. The *Mahabharata*, which is considered as a grand epic and attributed to the sage Vyasa, also refers the different manifestations of Vishnu.

<sup>1</sup> The word 'अवतार' is derived from the root 'तृ'-to descent' by adding the suffix 'घञ्' with prefix 'अव'. Though the root denote 'to descent' it is generally used in the sense of manifestation of a God.

<sup>2</sup> सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गाश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च ।  
वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम् ॥



In the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, Vishnu<sup>3</sup> occupied an important position among all the deities and his incarnations are distinctly noticed, but it is in the *Puranas*, that they acquired their fullest development.

### The concept of avatara:

Then the question arises as to what is the purpose of an *avatara*. It is seen that Lord Krishna himself in the *Bhagavadgita* announced explicitly the purpose of an *avatara* thus: "I manifest myself again and again, whenever *dharma* (righteousness) is in danger and *adharma* (unrighteousness) becomes rampant; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of *dharma*"<sup>4</sup>. The same idea is found in the *Vayupurana*, the *Matsyapurana* and the *Brahmapurana* and in the *Mahabharata*<sup>5</sup>. Besides the purpose stated above, the *Bhagavatapurana* cites another purpose of *avatara* i.e., enlightening the mankind.<sup>6</sup> *Avatars*, thus, come to serve the purpose and retire, when it is achieved.

The stray references of *avatara* concept can be found in a number of hymns of the *Rg-Veda*. It is said that Indra had taken many forms by his '*maya*'<sup>7</sup> (*bahumayah*). The word *maya* is used in the

<sup>3</sup> The word Vishnu can be derived from eleven roots. They are 1) विष्णु- to pervade 2) विष् - to separate 3) विष्णु - to sprinkle 4) विश् - to enter 5) णु- to praise 6) अशुञ् - to pervade 7) पिञ् - to bind 8) वी- to move 9) वश्- to move 10) देश्- to bestow 11) स्तम्भु - to control. He is addressed with these entire derivatives meaning either in the *Mahabharata* or the *puranas* - Sagarika 2<sup>nd</sup> Aranika Vikrama 2039, pp 17 - 76.

<sup>4</sup> यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ॥

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ The *Bhagavadgita* II 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> The *Vayupurana* 98.69, The *Matsyapurana* 47.233, The *Brahmapurana* 180.26-2 and 181.2-4, The *Mahabharata* *Asvamedhikaparva* 54.13 and *Vanaparva* 272.71-72.

<sup>6</sup> The *Bhagavatapurana* 3.24, 36.

<sup>7</sup> रूपं रूपं मघवा बोभवीति ॥ *Rg-Veda*. 3.5.3.8.

meaning of illusion.<sup>8</sup> The *Sathapatha Brahmana*<sup>9</sup> makes a reference to *Matsya, Kurma, Vamana* and *Varaha* avatars clearly. There is a hint about *Varahavatara* in the *Taittiriya Brahmana* (1.1.3.5) and the *Kathakasamhita* (8.2). All these avatars were connected to *Prajapati* in the Vedic period. A development of *avatara* concept gained momentum during the period of the *Bhagavadgita* (5-4 century BC), where Lord Krishna himself declares that he manifests himself again and again as per necessity.

### Number of avatars:

As far as the number of *avatas* of Vishnu is concerned, there are several versions in the *Mahabharata*. In the *Shantiparva* of the *Mahabharata* ten *avatas* are elucidated with their achievements viz., *Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Sattvata(Krishna), Hamsa* and *Kalki*.

The list of *avatas* of Vishnu varies from *purana* to *purana* and even sometimes within the *Purana* itself. For instance, the *Bhagavatapurana* has four different lists of *avatas* of Vishnu. The tenth *skandha*<sup>10</sup> of the *purana* contains a list of fourteen *avatas* where *Hayasirsha, Samkarshana, Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* are added to the list of ten already mentioned. The eleventh *skandha*<sup>11</sup> twenty *avatas* are enumerated. There are two lists containing twenty two *avatas* in the first<sup>12</sup> and the second *skandha* respectively. The names of *avatas* are 1) *Kumarasarga*, 2) *Varaha*, 3) *Narada* 4) *Naranarayana*, 5) *Kapila*, 6) *Dattatreya* 7) *Yagna*, 8) *Vrshabhadeva* 9) *Prthu* 10) *Matsya* 11) *kacchapa* 12) *Dhanvantari* 13) *Mohini* 14) *Narasimha* 15) *Vamana* 16) *Parasurama* 17) *Vedavyasa* 18) *Rama* 19) *Balarama* 20) *Krishna*

<sup>8</sup> The Mahabharata, Anusasanaparva. 75.28.

<sup>9</sup> The Sathapatha Brahmana 1.8.1.1, 1.2.5-7, 7.5.1.5; 14.1.2-11, and 14.1.2.11

<sup>10</sup> The Bhagavatapurana. 10. 40. 17-22

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 11. 4. 17-22

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 1. 3. 8-19.

21) *Buddha* and 22) *kalki*. But in the list of second skandha Narada, Mohini and Balarama are replaced with Hayasirsha, Gajendramokshadatta and Hamsa.

In spite of these variations in the number, most of the *puranas* declare that there is no bar for the number of *avatars*, because the Lord Krishna himself declares that he incarnates whenever necessity arises. The *Bhagavatapurana* expressively states that manifestation of Vishnu are innumerable 'अवताराहसंख्येयाः सत्त्वनिधेः' (1.3.26)". The *Harivamsa*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Agnipurana* reiterate the same idea.

The *avatars* of Vishnu have been regarded popularly as ten namely Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Balarama and kalki. In the later period, the Buddha was accepted as one of the Vishnu's *avatars* and included in the place of Balarama.<sup>13</sup> Prof. Kane also states that Buddha was considered as an *avatara* of Vishnu from 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and included in the list of ten by 10<sup>th</sup> century by majority<sup>14</sup>.

The *Varahapurana* names these ten *avatars* in the following order.

मत्स्य कूर्मो वराहश्च नृसिंहोऽथ वामनः ।

रामो रामश्च कृष्णश्च बुद्धः कल्कि च ते दश ॥

This verse is carved in the inscription on the lintel above the figure of Sankaranarayana in the *Varahaperuma*.<sup>15</sup> So this list of ten

<sup>13</sup> Purana Vimarsa. P.176.

<sup>14</sup> Kane, *History of Dharma Sastra* Vol. II. Pp. 721-723.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid Vol. V, Part II. P.993. Here Kane quotes the memoir No. 26 of the Archeological Survey of India by H. Krishna Sastry and ascribes it to the later half of 7<sup>th</sup> A.D.

*avatars* is accepted by 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. So Balarama was replaced by Buddha by that time.

Among the ten incarnations, the first two *Matsya* and *Kurma* were ascribed to *Prajapati* as in the *Sathapatha Brahmana* (1.8.1.1 & 2.5.1.5), but afterwards they are considered as incarnations of Vishnu. The first four incarnations *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Varaha* and *Narasimha* are supposed to have been appeared in the *Satyayuga*, the later three *Vamana*, *Parasurama* and *Rama* were in *Tretayuga* and *Krishna* in *Dwaparayuga*. Buddha was in *Kaliyuga*.<sup>16</sup> The last *avatara* *Kalki* is yet to appear. It is believed that this incarnation appears at the end of *Kaliyuga* riding on white horse with a sword for the destruction of the wicked, restoration of *dharma* and for renovation of the creation.

#### **Significance of Narasimha avatara:**

The manifestation of *Narasimha* is found in all the lists of the *Puranas*. Among the ten incarnations four *avatars* *Varaha*, *Narasimha*, *Rama* and *Krishna* are highly popular. It is to be noted that the *Rama* and *Krishna* incarnations have spent full life span in this world to establish *Dharma*, while *Narasimha* incarnation is short lived and occasional and disappeared after the purpose is fulfilled.

The manifestation of *Narasimha* has acquired a unique status among all the ten incarnations (*dasavatars*), not because of its short duration, nor because of the man-lion combination (anthropomorphic nature), but because of his attachment, affection towards his devotees. Like *Rama* and *Krishna*, the story of *Narasimha* has also been immensely fascinated people from time immemorial. The important quality that has been brought to light through this awe inspiring

Narasimha incarnation is *vatsalya* (affection). No other incarnation of the Lord has this quality as abundant as in that of Narasimha.<sup>17</sup>

The Lord Narasimha is a widely worshipped deity in the northern as well as the southern parts of the country. In the north he is worshipped in several Vishnu temples he has where as independent temples in south India. But, in the celebrated temple at Puri, the Lord Jagannatha is identified with that of the Lord Narasimha.<sup>18</sup>

A considerable studies related to the Lord Narasimha has taken place and an abundant literature in the form of books and articles are available not only in vernacular, but also in English. But majority of them are on the archeological and iconographical aspects. A beautiful monograph entitled '*Sri Narasimha Avatara*' is written by Dr. M.S. Rajajee IAS (Rtd) for the benefit of an ordinary devotee. The author himself submits in his own words that '-strictly speaking should have given footnote references when I quoted from different books. It was a conscious decision to avoid doing them, because my work is not for researchers or scholars but intended for the common pilgrim who has devotion in mind, faith in his heart and the name on his lips'<sup>19</sup>. Moreover his study is confined to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu only. Similarly another work by Dr. M. Narasimha Charyulu by name 'History of Narasimha cult in Andhra Pradesh,' is concentrated on historical and the archeological aspects and the work is confined to the temples of Andhra Pradesh only.

Keeping in mind the wide popularity enjoyed by the deity Narasimha and his cult through out the country, the present research

<sup>17</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee IAS (Rtd) *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, preface by Prof. M. Narasimhachary.

<sup>18</sup> TA Gopinadha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* Vol. I. Part I. Ideological Books House Varanasi, 2<sup>nd</sup> addition 1971, P. 190.

<sup>19</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee, *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, Preamble 'A Submission.'

work has been undertaken to cover almost all the religious aspects available in literature as well as in practice. I submit that though it was originally intended to touch upon all the aspects, but I could not do so due to my limitations and constraints. However, this is an attempt to bring forth as many things as possible about the deity Narasimha and his cult.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first Chapter deals with the different stages through which the Narasimha myth has attained the present status. The second Chapter deals with the worship of Narasimha in Agamic and Tantric texts in the forms of *mantra*, *yantra*, *salagrama*, *homa*, *yagna*, *vrata* etc. The third Chapter deals with Narasimha temples in India with special emphasis on Andhra Pradesh with their *sthalapuranas*. The fourth chapter deals with the literature woven around the Lord Narasimha. The fifth chapter deals with origin and development of Narasimha cult and its affinity with other cults. The last and sixth chapter draws the conclusion. Apart from a detailed bibliography, a few popular and important *stotras* available and the photographs of the Lord Narasimha are appended at the end.

## CHAPTER I

# THE NARASIMHA MYTH

## CHAPTER I

### THE NARASIMHA MYTH

Although the first five of ten incarnations of Vishnu are mythological in character and all other four, except Narasimha have clear cut references in *Vedas*. Some traditional scholars like Krishnamacharya trace the myth in the *Rg-veda* as stated by Swain<sup>1</sup>. A stray reference found in the *Rg-Veda*, hints at significant characteristics which clearly resemble with the characteristic of Narasimha. While describing the Lord Vishnu, the hymn addresses as "For this his mighty deed is Vishnu landed, like some wild beast, dread, prowling, mountain-roaring"<sup>2</sup>. But a direct and earlier reference of Narasimha is found in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*, where Lord Narasimha is invoked in a *Gayatri Mantra*<sup>3</sup>-

“वज्रनखाय विग्रहे तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्राय धीमहि तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात्”

Here he is described as one who possesses sharp claws and fangs, which were used as weapon to kill the demon Hiranyakasipu. Therefore, we can consider that this idea of Narasimha is for the first time mentioned directly. But Swain opines that this myth belongs to the period of epics.<sup>4</sup> Besides the *Mahabharata* and its later addition *Harivamsa*, the Narasimha myth is found in the following *Puranas* and *Upapuranas*.

- 1) *The Agnipurana*
- 2) *The Vayupurana*
- 3) *The Brahmmandapurana*
- 4) *The Brahmapurana*

<sup>1</sup> Krishnamacharya in his interpretation of the 'dve-virupe' Sukta ( Rg Veda. 1.95) tries to prove the existence of the myth in Rg veda (Krishnamacharya viracitam Dve-Virupe sukta bhasyam edited by V.S. Bhide published by Bharata Itihasa Satsodhaka Mandala; Poona, 1968) – A.C. Swain “ A study of the Man- Lion Myth”,p38

<sup>2</sup> 'प्र तद्विष्णुः स्तवते वीर्येण मृगो न भीमः कुचरो गिरिष्ठाः' Rg- Veda I.154.2a

<sup>3</sup> Tai. A. X. 1. 6

<sup>4</sup> Swain, A.C., A study of the Man-Lion Myth. P. 38



- 5) *The Skandapurana*
- 6) *The Vishnudharmottarapurana*
- 7) *The Padmapurana*
- 8) *The Matsyapurana*
- 9) *The Saurapurana*
- 10) *The Kurmapurana*
- 11) *The Sivapurana*
- 12) *The Lingapurana*
- 13) *The Vishnupurana*
- 14) *The Narasimhapurana*
- 15) *The Bhagavatapurana* and
- 16) *The Garudapurana*

The Narasimha myth in the above texts will be discussed in the developmental order of the concept of Narasimha, but not the chronological order of *puranas*.

### ***The Mahabharata:***

The Narasimha Myth referred to in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* has been developed into an anecdote in the *Mahabharata*, while enumerating the important incarnations of Vishnu. The *Aranyakaparva* narrates how the Lord Vishnu, having manifested himself in the form of Narasimha has killed the demon king Hiranyakasipu<sup>5</sup>. The reason for slaying Hiranyakasipu is given in the *Santiparva* briefly. Vishnu says that "I shall kill Hiranyakasipu, son of Diti, because he is destroying the sacrifices meant for the benefit of deities"<sup>6</sup>. So the reason for killing Hiranyakasipu is that he was destroying the sacrifices meant for the deities.

<sup>5</sup> आदिदैत्यो महावीर्यो हिरण्यकशिपुस्त्वया ।  
नरशिंहं वपुं कृत्वा सुदितः पुरुषोत्तम ॥ M. Bh. III.100.2

<sup>6</sup> नरशिंहं वपुं कृत्वा हिरण्यकशिपुं पुनः  
सुरकार्यं हनिष्यामि यज्ञघ्नं दितिनन्दनम् ॥ M. Bh. XII. 326.73

## 1) The *Agnipurana*:

In the *Agnipurana*,<sup>7</sup> while describing the ten incarnations of Vishnu, the incarnation of Narasimha is narrated in only two verses. It says that Narasimha has killed Hiranyakasipu, the brother of Hiranyaksha when he defeated the celestials in the war and monopolized their share of offerings in the sacrifices.

## 2) The *Vayupurana*:

The Narasimha myth in the *Vayupurana* is stated thus:<sup>8</sup>The demon Hiranyakasipu performed penance for thousands of years to propitiate Brahma. Brahma having pleased appeared and bestowed boons on him. Hiranyakasipu wanted that "he should not be killed by any being; and all *asuras* and *devas* should be placed on equal footing and he should be crowned with supreme lordship. Brahma granted these boons and disappeared at once. Hiranyakasipu attained supreme position by defeating all his enemies. Such a powerful demon king Hiranyakasipu was torn off by Vishnu in the form of Narasimha by his sharp claws which were neither wet nor dry<sup>9</sup>.

In this episode although there are no conditions under which the demon king Hiranyakasipu should not to be killed, it is stated that the demon was torn off by the claws of Narasimha, which were neither wet nor dry.

<sup>7</sup> The *Agnipurana*, IV. 3-5

<sup>8</sup> The *Vayupurana*, Uttarartham, 6. 61-66

<sup>9</sup> नखैस्तु तेन निर्भिन्ना नाद्रंशुष्का नखा स्मृतः। Vayu.P. Uttarardha .6.66

### 3) The *Brahmandapurana*:

Next comes the *Brahmandapurana*.<sup>10</sup> A.C. Swain remarked that both, Pargitar<sup>11</sup> and Prof. Willibard Kirfel<sup>12</sup> are of the view that both the texts of the *Brahmandapurana* and the *Vayupurana* were based on one text Kernal, one manuscript and two separate redactors. Hence two different Puranas came into existence. The Narasimha Myth in the *Brahmandapurana* was an improved version of the *Vayupurana*, though there are several textual parallels.

The boon granted to Hiranyakasipu in the *Vayupurana* is that "danavas, asuras and devas should be put on equal footing", while the demand of Hiranyakasipu according to the *Brahmandapurana* is that "all the danavas, asuras and devas should be under his control". It clearly establishes his desire of becoming Supreme Lord. The conditions under which Hiranyakasipu supposed to die are enumerated in the *Brahmandapurana* and in the *Vayupurana*. He desired that he should die neither by a wet nor by a dry thing; and neither during day nor at night<sup>13</sup>. Brahma grants the boon. While the oppression of gods by Hiranyakasipu was narrated in a single verse in the *Vayupurana*<sup>14</sup>, the *Brahmandapurana* describes it in six verses<sup>15</sup>. Hiranyakasipu assumed the forms of the Moon, the Sun and the Wind; he became the priest, the sacrifice and the expounder of the *mantras*. He was the lord and protector. The demons along with the deities shared the some juice. All were ordered to worship him only. As result, all the deities and sages

<sup>10</sup> The *Brahmandapurana*. 2. 5. 13-19

<sup>11</sup> Pargitar, *Indian Historical Tradition* (cf. Swain, A. C. , A study of Man-Lion myth, p.39)

<sup>12</sup> Prof. Willibard Kirfel, *Dasa purana panca lakshna* (cf. *ibid* )

11. आर्द्रशुष्कैरवध्यथ दिवरात्रौ तथैव च । The *Brahmanda* P. II.V.17. Prof. Kane observes that some of these conditions to Hiranyakasipu were supplied by the story of the slaughter of Namuci's by Indra at dawn with the foam of water. The conditions for killing Namuci are, "he should not be killed by day or by night; with dry or the moist, with palm or with fist and with staff or bow etc. (Satapatha Brahmana 12.7.3.1-4. *History of Dharma Sastra*, Poona, volume, II pp 718-719.

<sup>14</sup> The *Vayupurana*, Uttarartha. 6-65.

<sup>15</sup> The *Brahmandapurana*. 2.5.20-25.

were used to paying homages to him only. The method of killing the demon king is same as in the *Vayupurana*<sup>16</sup>. In this *Purana*, there is a reference that the demon king had four sons among whom Prahlada was the eldest.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4) The *Brahmapurana* and 5) The *Skandapurana*

The version of the *Brahmapurana*<sup>18</sup> is exactly same as the legend given in the *Harivamsaparva* of *Harivamsa*<sup>19</sup>.

The demon king Hiranyakasipu did penance for eleven thousand and five hundred years. Brahma being pleased by his penance appeared before him along with all the *devas*, *Yakshas*, *Kinnaras*, Sages and Rivers, the Planets etc. When he asked about the boon of his choice, Hiranyanyakasipu put forth enormous conditions under which he should embrace the death - "he should be killed by a person who can kill him with a single stroke and at the same time the person should neither be a deity nor a demon nor a *gandharva* nor a *yaksha* nor a reptile"<sup>20</sup>. Further he states that his death should not be caused by a curse of the sages, not by the weapons, nor the mountains, nor the rivers and not by anything wet or dry. And he should not die either in the sky or on the earth. Brahma confers the boon which is great and significant. When the deities were afraid of the consequences of the boon, Brahma consoles them saying that the demon king had to enjoy the fruit of his penance and he would be killed by Vishnu at an appropriate time.

Hiranyakasipu, being proud of his boon oppressed all the deities and seers and enjoyed the homage of sacrifices meant for the deities.

<sup>16</sup> नखैर्विभेद संकुदो नार्द्रशुष्को नखा इति । . Ibid 2.5.29b

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 2. 5. 33

<sup>18</sup> The *Brahmapurana*. 213.44-79

<sup>19</sup> The *Harivamsaparva* of *Harivamsa*. 41.40-78

<sup>20</sup> The *Brahmapurana*. 213.55-56

Then Brahma along with all the deities approached Vishnu and reports the atrocities of Hiranyakasipu. Vishnu understanding the plight of celestials entered the assembly hall of Hiranyakasipu in the form of Narasimha and killed the demon king with a single stroke<sup>21</sup>.

The specialty of the *Brahmapurana* is that the condition asked by Hiranyakasipu as a part of the boon is that he should die in the hands of a person, who can kill him with a single stroke, but not by a god or a demon or a *Gandharva* or a reptile. It seems to fulfill this condition only, Hiranyakasipu and other demons were killed with a single stroke by Narasimha, whereas the other versions say that he was torn off by the sharp claws. But this method of killing will be contrary to the condition that the demon should not die by any thing wet or dry. Even in the *Skandapurana*, while explaining the greatness of Narasimha Tirtha, we find the boon of Hiranyakasipu that he should be killed by a person who can kill him, his race and his followers with a single stroke of his palm<sup>22</sup>. Accordingly the *Brahmapurana*, the *Harivamsaparva* of *Harivamsa* and the *Skandapurana* Hiranyakasipu was killed by a single stroke of Narasimha.

#### **6) The Vishnudharmottarapurana:**

The story of the *Vishnudharmottarapurana*<sup>23</sup> deviated a little from the story of the *Brahmapurana* and states that the demon king Hiranyakasipu was playfully torn off into pieces by Narasimha by placing him on his lap<sup>24</sup>. In the *puranas* dealt with so far have no mention of Prahlada at all.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 213.79

<sup>2</sup> The *Skandapurana*. V.77.10

<sup>3</sup> The *Vishnudharmottarapurana*. 1.54

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 1.54.50

## 7) The *Padmapurana* and 8) The *Matsyapurana*:

These *Puranas* represent a later development of Narasimha myth. Compared to the previous versions a more developed legend is found in the *Padmapurana*<sup>25</sup>. The myth has taken a poetic style as there is a beautiful description of the assembly of Hiranyakasipu. Many demons like Bali, Vali, Naraka and Prahlada were attending upon him, when Vishnu appeared in the form of Narasimha in the assembly, Prahlada, who was of great prowess (वीर्यवान्) recognized Narasimha at first and saw the whole universe in him including the assembly hall of Hiranyakasipu along with the members present there<sup>26</sup>. Though he could recognize the divinity of Narasimha, he could not identify him as Vishnu himself in the form of Narasimha<sup>27</sup>. By observing the cosmic form, Prahlada surprisingly expressed his doubt to his father Hiranyakasipu. But Hiranyakasipu without paying any attention ordered his men to catch the beast. Then there is a vivid description of the fight between Narasimha and Hiranyakasipu. When the fight was in progress many evil portents appeared and finally the demon king was torn off by Narasimha with his sharp claws.

In the *Matsyapurana*, the myth runs into three chapters<sup>28</sup>, which is similar to the version of the *Padmapurana*. But the difference is that: In the *Padmapurana*, Prahlada with his divine form had the vision of the whole universe in Narasimha,<sup>29</sup> whereas he had the vision with his divine eye<sup>30</sup> in the *Matsyapurana*. Of these two versions, the version of the *Matsyapurana* "*Divyena Cakshusa*" is an appropriate one. Even in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavadgita*, Lord Krishna bestows

<sup>25</sup> The *Padmapurana*. V. 42.1-197

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* V. 42.84-96

<sup>27</sup> अच्युतं परमं दिव्यं किमिदमागतम् । *Ibid* V.42.88

<sup>28</sup> The *Matsyapurana*. chapters 160-162

<sup>29</sup> दिव्येन वपुषा सिंहमपस्यद् देवमागतम् । *Padmapurana* V.42.85

<sup>30</sup> दिव्येन चक्षुषा सिंहमपस्यद् देवमागतम् । *Matsyapurana* 162.2

supernatural eye to Arjuna to enable him to witness his cosmic form (विश्वरूप),<sup>31</sup> stating that he cannot witness cosmic form with normal eye.

The question that arises now is what made the *Padmapurana* and the *Matsyapurana* to bring Prahlada in to the myth and to say that Prahlada visualized the universal form of Narasimha, when earlier versions had not brought Prahlada into the myth of Narasimha though they were aware that Prahlada was the eldest son of Hiranyakasipu. Probably the reason may be assumed like this: At the beginning, Prahlada might have pictured as a great demon with demoniac nature in *Mahabharata*. But the subsequent additions of the *Mahabharata* might have brought complete change in the character of Prahlada, where he was depicted as a pious and noble person. In the *Bhagavadgita*, Lord Krishna says "of the demons, I am Prahlada"<sup>32</sup>. In the evolution of Vaishnava cult, he was considered as a staunch devotee of Vishnu. It appears that because of these reasons, the *Padmapurana* and the *Matsyapurana* have introduced Prahlada in the assembly of Hiranyakasipu and made him visualize the cosmic form of Narasimha.

The versions of the *Saurapurana*, the *Kurmapurana*, and the *Bhavisyaparva* of the *Harivamsa* and *Rudrasamhita* of the *Sivapurana* form a bridge between two different characteristics of Prahlada i.e., a demon with usual demonic nature and a devotee of Vishnu as found in the versions of the *Vishnu* and the *Bhagavatapuranas*.

<sup>31</sup> न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।  
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वर्यम् ॥१०॥ Bhagavadgita. XI. 8

<sup>32</sup> प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानाम् । Bhagavadgita. X. 30

## 9) The *Saurapurana*:

The *Saurapurana*<sup>33</sup> narrates that Hiranyakasipu; proud of the boon obtained from Brahma began to torture the divines. Then Vishnu manifested himself before Hiranyakasipu in the form of Narasimha and challenged him for a fight. The demon sent Prahlada and other three sons to fight with Narasimha. When their great weapons such as *Brahma*, *Vaishnava*, *Kaumara* and *Agneya* have become futile,<sup>34</sup> Narasimha caught hold of them at once. Hiranyakasipu became furious at the defeat of his sons. Meanwhile Prahlada, who realizes that Narasimha was none other than the supreme God Vishnu, advises his father and to surrender to Narasimha rather than to fight<sup>35</sup>. But Hiranyakasipu ignoring his words fought with Narasimha and being torn off with his sharp claws. A similar account is found in the *Suryapurana*<sup>36</sup> also.

## 10) The *Kurmapurana*:

Next comes the *Kurmapurana*<sup>37</sup> version of Narasimha myth. This version is almost similar to that of *Saurapurana*, but adds some more details of the weapons etc. Being requested by the deities to protect from the demon king, Vishnu created a divine person, who was invincible, fearful and gigantic, possessing conch, discus and club and ordered him to go and kill the demon king<sup>38</sup>. That person went to the city

<sup>33</sup> The *Saurapurana*. 28.17-37

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 28.29 - 30

<sup>35</sup> ज्ञात्वा तु भगवद्भावं नृसिंहस्यामितौजषं  
ध्यात्वा नारायणं देवं वारयामास दानवान् ॥  
एष नारायणो योगी परमात्मा सनातनं

ध्यातव्यो न तु योद्धव्यो भवद्भिरिति निश्चितम् ॥ ibid. 28.34-35

<sup>36</sup> The *Suryapurana*. Ed. By Dr. Chamanlal, Goutam Samskruta Samstan, Barich, 1986. pp. 112-124.

<sup>37</sup> The *Kurmapurana*. 1.15 18-88

<sup>38</sup> वधाय दैत्यमुख्यस्य सोऽमृजत् पुरुषं स्वयं ।  
अघृष्यं मेरुवर्ष्माणं घोररूपं भयानकम् ॥



of the demon king on the vehicle of Garuda and challenged by making a frightful sound (*Bhairavanada*). Hiranyakasipu sent his four sons to fight with him. Prahlada hurled the *Brahmastra*; Anuhlada, the *Vaisnava*; Samhlada, the *Kaumara*; and Hlada, the *Agneya*. But all of them had become futile. The Devine Person caught hold of the hands and legs of all of them together and threw them away and shouted again. Hiranyakasipu became furious at the defeat of his sons and kicked heavily with his feet on the chest of that divine person<sup>39</sup>. The divine person returned and informed the matter to Vishnu. Then lord Vishnu with his divine power created Narasimha with half body of a man and half body of a lion and sent again. Narasimha appeared before the demon king with dreadful fangs and resembling the fire of delusion, shining like the sun light at noon. Looking at Narasimha, the demon king sent Prahlada along with other demons to kill the lord, whom he assessed as inferior to him. Prahlada fought with the lord with all his efforts but was defeated. Then Hiranyaksa<sup>40</sup>, by the order of his brother released *Pasupatastra* and shouted. Prahlada finding the *Pasupatastra* becoming futile against Narasimha realised that he is none other than the Omnipresent Almighty Vishnu and advised his father Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksa to surrender to the lord. However Hiranyakasipu ignoring his son's advice and thinking Narasimha was inferior to him fought with him and was torn off by the lord with his sharp nails. Then Lord Vishnu returns to his abode.

The version of the *Bhavisyaparva* of *Harivamsa*<sup>41</sup> following the versions of the *Padmapurana* and the *Matsyapurana* points out the conditions under which the demon king should not die. They are “the

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शङ्खचक्रगदापाणिं तं प्राह गरुडध्वजः । ibid. 1. 15. 32 & 33

<sup>39</sup> पादेन ताडयामास वेगेनोरसि तं बली । Ibid 1.15.47 b.

<sup>40</sup> Hiranyaksa, the brother of the demon king Hiranyakasipu, who was supposed to have been killed by Vishnu in the form of varaha (boar) and for whose slaughter, Hiranyakasipu developed hatred towards Vishnu in earlier versions, find place here as assisted the demon king in his fight with Narasimha.

<sup>41</sup> The *Harivamsa* (*Bhavisyaparva*). Chs. 41-47

demon should not die either in the heaven or in the hell or on the earth or in the sky. He should not die either in day or at night<sup>42</sup>. Another change was that when all the deities approached Vishnu requesting him to kill the demon king, he assured them and was worried as to how to kill the demon king under conditions imposed by the boon of Brahma. He went to Himalayas and thought over the method to kill the demon king. Like in the *Padma* and the *Matsyapuranas*, Prahlada saw the whole universe in Narasimha and narrated it to his father. When he did not pay any attention, he started to meditate upon Narasimha in whom he saw the whole universe by bowing down his head<sup>43</sup>. When Prahlada was called *Viryavan* (of great prowess) in earlier versions, here he was called *Mahamanti* (very wise). Here though Prahlada was not a devotee of Vishnu from the beginning, he started meditation as soon as he witnessed the whole Universe in Narasimha. Thus his attitude of going against Dharma with usual demonic nature had transformed into devotional attitude. This helped the coming versions to project Prahlada as a true devotee of Vishnu.

Like in the *Padmapurana*, here also many evil omens were seen found while the fight between the demon king and Narasimha was in progress. An innovation in this version is the conversation of Hiranyakasipu and Sukracarya. Sukracarya, the royal priest of demons told that either the kingdom would be lost or the king would be killed because of those evil portents<sup>44</sup>. But ignoring the prophecy of Sukracarya, Hiranyakasipu fought with Narasimha and was killed by him.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 41.15

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 43.17

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Chapter 46.

## 11) *The Sivapurana:*

The Narasimha myth in the *Sivapurana* appears in two places like in the *Harivamsa*, at the Forty-third chapter of *Yudhakanda* of *Rudrasamhita*<sup>45</sup> and 10 – 12 chapters of *Satarudrasamhita*<sup>46</sup>.

The version of the *Sivapurana* almost followed the versions of the *Padmapurana* and the *Harivamsa (Bhavishyaparva)* with some minor changes. The main change is that the demon king unlike the earlier versions invaded the heaven and drove away the Gods as a revenge for the death of his brother in the hands of Vishnu. He started to perform a severe penance for propitiate Brahma to conquer the death. In the meantime the Gods once again settled in their places by subduing the demons. The flames caused by the severe penance of the demon king frightened the Gods and made them to approach Brahma for protection. Brahma appeared before the demon king and bestowed the boon. The arrogant Hiranyakasipu again started to torture the deities. Vishnu, being requested by the Gods, had taken the form of Narasimha and went to the city of the demon king and killed all the demons who opposed him. Prahlada visualized the supreme nature of Narasimha and advised his father to surrender in order to protect himself, since there was no one in all the three worlds equal to Him in prowess. The demon king, ignoring the advice of his son sent his warriors to fight with Narasimha and finally he himself was torn off into pieces by Narasimha. Then, Lord Narasimha after installing Prahlada on the throne disappeared. It is clearly stated that the God himself coronated Prahlada as the successor of the demon king.

*Another version found in the Satarudrasamhita of the Sivapurana contains a slight different version. Like in the Harivamsa, the*

<sup>45</sup> The Sivapurana. 2.5.43

<sup>46</sup> The Sivapurana. 3.10-12

*SivaPurana* too contains Narasimha myth in two different places. The present myth is really an extended version of the earlier one. An attempt for the establishment of the supremacy of Saivism can be observed in this version. This might have happened because of working out of two different redactors. The Bhakti cult as well as the enthusiastic attempts to establish the supremacy of Saivism and Vaishnavism over each other and especially the advent of Virasaivism might have influenced to bring out this change. This version is as follows:

Jaya and Vijaya, the door keepers of Lord Vishnu being cursed, were born to Kasyapa as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha. To save the earth that was being carried away by Hiranyaksha, Vishnu in the form of a Boar (*Varaha*) killed Hiranyaksha. Hiranyakasipu, who was fond of his brother developed hatred towards Vishnu and to take revenge did penance for several years and got the boon from Brahma that he should not be killed by any of his creation. He conquered all the three worlds and tortured the seers and deities. When the demon king started to hate his son Prahlada, devotee of Vishnu and Vishnu himself in particular, Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha descended from the pillar of hall.<sup>47</sup> The Lord first killed all the demons, who tried to attack him and then there was a terrible fight between Narasimha and the demon king. Finally in the evening dragging the demon king to the threshold of the palace and placing him on his lap, the Lord tore open the demon king with his sharp nails even while all the Gods were looking on.

After killing the demon king Hiranyakasipu, the furious flames of the anger of the lord Narasimha did not subside. Seeing that dreadful and awful form of Narasimha, the Gods, and the Goddess Lakshmi got astonished and the whole universe again trembled. To pacify the fury, Brahma and other Gods have made Prahlada to go near Narasimha,

<sup>47</sup> सभास्तम्भातदा विष्णुराविर्भूतम्मुने । The ०००Sivapurana (Satarudrasamhita). 3.10.17a

who embraced Prahlada with full of compassion by which his chest became cool, but the flames were not controlled<sup>48</sup>. The Gods have finally requested the Lord Siva to pacify the fury of Narasimha for the welfare of the universe. Siva had agreed to find out a solution to come over the menace.

Having sent back all the Gods, Siva created Virabhadra and ordered to go and pacify the fury of Narasimha with soothing words. If Narasimha fails to pacify himself even after his advice, Siva ordered him to kill and bring his skull and skin (कृत्ति). The leader of *ganas* Virabhadra with calm posture went to Narasimha reminded him of all the great deeds done in his Mastya, Kurma, and Varaha incarnations and finally requested him to cool down for the welfare of the universe. Narasimha becoming more furious and asked Virabhadra to go back saying that no one would kill him and he would engulf the whole world with his flames. Virabhadra, failing in his attempts had assumed the form of Sarabha, a gigantic form with big wings, very sharp and lengthy fangs, and nails as weapons, black neck, lengthy arms, four legs, with three furious eyes making terrific sounds pounced on Narasimha.. Sarabha caught hold of Narasimha's legs with tail and hands with hands and sticking on his chest with hands flew up into the sky along with Narasimha like an eagle with a serpent and flying up and down repeatedly. Then Narasimha, requests him to forgive his condemnable ignorance and ego whenever it rises.<sup>49</sup> In spite of his request, Virabhadra cut off the head of Narasimha and peeled the skin and offered it to Siva as ordered earlier. All the Gods praised Siva for his timely protection. The Lord Siva told them that Vishnu, who was in Narasimha form was merged within

<sup>48</sup> उरसाऽलिङ्गयामास तं नरसिंहः कृपानिधिः ।  
हृदयं शीतलं जातं रुद्रज्वाला न निवर्तितः ॥ Ibid 3.10.29.

<sup>49</sup> यदा यदा ममाज्ञानमत्यहङ्कारदूषितम् ।  
तदा तदा तदपनेतव्यं त्वयैव परमेश्वर ॥ ibid 3. 12.

himself like water in water; milk in milk. He directed all the Gods and his devotees to worship Narasimha also along with him stating the praise of Siva pleases Narasimha and praise of Narasimha pleases him<sup>50</sup>. From then Siva became *Krutivasa* wearing the skin of Narasimha and the skull also took prominent place in Siva's *Mundamala* (garland of skulls).

## 12) The *Lingapurana*:

The Narasimha myth similar to the myth of the *Sivapurana* is found in the *Lingapurana*<sup>51</sup>. This is an improvised version with more poetical flavour.

The *Sivapurana* stated that Hiranyakasipu had a son Prahlada, who was a devotee of Vishnu from the beginning and was against the wishes of his father. Prahlada, who was truthful, wise and noble and inspite of being warned by his father to stop worshipping Vishnu used to inspire his friends to worship Vishnu. Finding his son's unchanged attitude, Hiranyakasipu ordered his attendants to kill Prahlada. But all the attempts of demons to kill Prahlada became futile by the grace of Vishnu. Finally Vishnu manifested in the form of Narasimha and tore open the belly of the demon king with his sharp claws. With a terrible roar of Narasimha, all the Gods including Brahma were horrified and ran away to *Lokaloka* Mountain and praised Narasimha in an extensive manner, but the Lord could not be pacified because of the animal instinct in him<sup>52</sup>.

Like in the *Sivapurana*, here also the Gods headed by Brahma approached and informed the matter to Siva and requested him to control Narasimha. The praise of Siva by Gods was an extensive one

<sup>50</sup> प्रार्थनीयो नमस्तस्मै मद्रक्तैः सिद्धिं कांक्षिभिः . Ibid. 3.12.

<sup>51</sup> TheLingapurana chapters 95 & 96

<sup>52</sup> न जगाम द्विजः शान्तिं मानयन्योनिमात्मनः । TheLingapurana. 95.30a

here<sup>53</sup>. The story of Sarabha controlling Narasimha just runs like in Siva Purana Narasimha's praise of Siva after clearing of his illusion was lengthy<sup>54</sup>. Like in Siva Purana, here also after killing Narasimha, the skin and skull of Narasimha were made use of by Siva all were ordered to worship lord Narasimha also along with him.

Then the *phalasaruti* added at the end of the story states that who ever read or hear this story, would get relived of miseries, get abundant crop, glory, longevity, good health, clear off all hurdles and illness, untimely death, bestowed with peace and get whatever is desired etc. and finally attain the abode of Siva<sup>55</sup>.

It is noteworthy that both the versions of the *Sivapurana* and the *Lingapurana* have attempted to establish the supremacy of Siva over Vishnu by extending the myth beyond the death of Hiranyakasipu and a terrible fight between Narasimha and Sarabha, who are the two anthropomorphical forms of Vishnu and Siva respectively. However, at the end they tried to maintain a balance between Siva and Vishnu by the ordain given by Lord Siva that Lord Vishnu is to be worshipped in the form of Narasimha by the devotees, who wishes to obtain prosperity.

Another characteristic that one will find in these two versions is that the character of Prahlada was totally transformed into devotional without any tinge of his demonic nature found in earlier versions. Even in the *Lingapurana*, it is stated that he used to teach the devotion of Vishnu to his childhood friends and the demon king attempted to kill his son for his act of worshipping Vishnu, his enemy. This feature of Prahlada is further highlighted in coming versions of the *Vishnupurana* and the *Bhagavatapurana* more elaborately.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 95.35-52 a.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 96. 76-94.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 96. 117-128

### 13) *The Vishnupurana*:

The legend in the *Vishnupurana*<sup>56</sup> follows like this:

Having acquired a boon from Brahma, Hiranyakasipu oppressed the seers and deities and established his sovereignty over all the three worlds. Prahlada was his son, who was a staunch devotee of Vishnu right from his birth. Prahlada was studying along with other children of the demons under the teachers Sanda and Amarka. Once Hiranyakasipu keeping his son Prahlada on his lap asked to recite a lesson that he learnt. Then Prahlada glorified the greatness of Vishnu. Immediately Hiranyakasipu became furious and ordered his soldiers to kill Prahlada for his intolerable devotion to Vishnu, who was his enemy. The soldiers hit Prahlada with weapons; used venomous snakes to bit him; made elephants trampled down; placed him in the midst of fire. But none harmed him because of his devotion to Vishnu. The teachers requested the demon king to give them a chance to change Prahlada's attitude and was sent to school again. He learnt all that the teachers taught him and taking advantage of the absence of the teachers gave a sermon to his classmates on the greatness of Vishnu<sup>57</sup> and asked them to contemplate on Vishnu, who was Omnipotent and Omnipresent. The teachers were afraid of the demon king, because of the unaltered behavior of Prahlada and reported the matter to Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada did not agree with the words of his teachers to worship his father as a Supreme Being and said his father was venerable to him and equal to a deity but not a supreme being. He categorically proclaimed that lord Vishnu alone was almighty and supreme. The priests, with their supernatural power produced a fiery flame and hit the chest of Prahlada with it. But it fell down and broke into pieces without harming him. Then Hiranyakasipu called his son and asked for the failure of all his devices. Prahlada explained that he was protected by

<sup>56</sup> The Vishnupurana. I. 16-20 chapters

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. I. 17. 55-91



the power of Lord Vishnu from all those devices. The demon king ordered to throw Pahlada from the top of the palace on the rocks to kill, but when that was also failed; he sought the help of Sambara, a magician to kill the boy. All the subtle magics employed on Pahlada were cleared off by Vishnu with his Chakra. Hiranyakasipu having failed in all his attempts ordered to place Pahlada at the bottom of the ocean and the demons bound him with *Nagapasas* and piled big rocks around him.

Pahlada from there in the ocean meditated upon Vishnu, as soon as he was identified with Vishnu, the *Nagapasas* were cleared off and the ocean was agitated to give way to Pahlada to come out. He came out and praised Lord Vishnu in many ways<sup>58</sup>. Most surprisingly the Lord Vishnu appeared before Pahlada in his usual form wearing yellow ropes.<sup>59</sup> Vishnu was pleased by the devotion of Pahlada and granted three boons to him.<sup>60</sup> The three boons pahlada choose were: 1) his everlasting firm devotion to Vishnu. 2) Pardon for the sins of his father torturing him and 3) to attain liberation in due course on account of devotion and attachment to him. After granting the boons Vishnu disappeared and Pahlada went to his father. Hiranyakasipu repented for his cruel treatment towards his son and shed tears. He started to treat him with kindness.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, the myth of Narasimha is given a change here and this kind of behavior of Hiranyakasipu is not found in any other version and also Vishnu's appearance in his usual form to grant boons to Pahlada, is seen only in the *Narasimhapurana* in addition to this Purana. Without ignoring the tradition of the earlier *Puranas*, Vishnu here also

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. I.19.64-86 and I.20. 9-13

<sup>59</sup> आदिर्बभूव भगवान् पीताम्बरधरः हरिः । Ibid I.20. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. I.20.18-28.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. I. 20. 30-31

manifested in Narasimha form and killed Hiranyakasipu,<sup>62</sup> which was stated in a simple way, whereas in all most of all previous versions a terrible fight between the demon king and Narasimha was described. This version has taken a complete different turn in the myth. Prahlada was the main figure and had become a true devotee of Vishnu. In the *Sivapurana*, Prahlada was mentioned as a devotee of Vishnu from the beginning, but not clear of his age and in the *Lingapurana*; Prahlada was a devotee of Vishnu right from his birth and even taught the devotion of Vishnu to his childhood friends. In the *Lingapurana*, it is even said that Hiranyakasipu attempted to kill his son Prahlada for his devotion to Vishnu, but failed in all his attempts. However, it is in this version of the *Vishnupurana* only, the character of Prahlada was brought to limelight with much emphasis and total version is woven around him.

Here in this version, Prahlada was just a child and was devoted to Vishnu from his very childhood. The tender age and helplessness made the demon king to torment him severely either to change him or to end his life, though all the attempts became futile.

In this regard Swain<sup>63</sup> opined that Hiranyakasipu in this version was killed for torturing his son Prahlada. It is better to understand that he was killed for his misbehavior with the seers and the deities and for destroying sacrifices, instead of the reason of torturing his son Prahlada, since there is no meaning in killing Hiranyakasipu for torturing his son, when Vishnu himself granted a boon to pardon the demon king. Moreover Hiranyakasipu also repented for his misbehavior to his son, but not for his misdeeds. Besides, in this version no representation to Vishnu about the atrocities of the demon king and the request to punish him is not seen, which might have prompted Swain to think so.

<sup>62</sup> पितर्युपरतिं नीते नरसिंहस्वरूपिणा । ibid I.20. 32.

<sup>63</sup> Swain, A.C., *A study of the Man- Lion Myth* , p. 45

However, according to the incarnation theory in the *Bhagavadgita*<sup>64</sup> “Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of injustice, I manifest myself.” It can be presumed that it was his duty to set right the world whenever it was in disorder. Hence there is no need for any representation. So mentioning the reason for the killing of Hiranyakasipu for his oppressions of the deities and the sages and the destruction of their sacrifices is the most appropriate one.

Prahlada, in this version, is pictured as a true devotee of Vishnu. When he was teaching his class mates about the devotion to Vishnu, he said” the whole universe is the manifestation of Vishnu. Search for the identity of Vishnu in all creatures. True worship of Vishnu consists in treating all equally<sup>65</sup> This, he had shown in his personal life by asking the boon to pardon his father for the sins committed by torturing him.

It seems the devotion to Vishnu and his grace were the main theme of this version. Parasara while introducing Prahlada to the sages introduce him as a true devotee of Vishnu. To show the power of *Bhakti* (devotion), Prahlada is pictured as a tender child and withstood all the torments. This final victory was the victory of the *Bhakti*. One more important element of this version is Prahlada’s sermons on Vaishnavism to his class mates. This shows that the main theme of this version is the propagation of *Bhakti* cult. In this connection Swain<sup>66</sup> approvingly quotes the words of Prof. OTTO: “By the time the *Vishnupurana* was written, Vaisnavism had been a strong missionary religion. It had a long fight not only against Buddhism but also against other sects and beliefs. Prahlada in the *Vishnupurana* acts as a missionary. He gathers his classmates around him and gives them lessons on Vishnu”. So no doubt *Bhakti* aspect is given a significant role in this version.

<sup>64</sup> The Bhagavadgita. IV.7

<sup>65</sup> सर्वत्र दैत्यास्समन्तां उपेत ।

समत्वं आराधनं अच्युतस्य ॥ Vishnu P 1.17.90.

<sup>66</sup> Swain Ac, A study of the Man-Lion Myth p. 47.

## ***The Padmapurana:***

Like the *Harivamsa* and the *Sivapurana*, the *Padmapurana* too contains Narasimha myth in two different *Khandas*<sup>67</sup>. The story of this version is as follows:

Hiranyakasipu did penance towards Siva<sup>68</sup>. He got a boon not to die at the hands of any animate or inanimate being. He established his sovereignty all over the three worlds. He had a son by name Prahlada, who was a true devotee of Vishnu right from his childhood. He stayed with the teachers and learnt all the lore. Once, when he visited his father, Hiranyakasipu embraced Prahlada and made him to sit on his lap. Being asked about his studies, Prahlada praised Vishnu and offered salutations to him. The demon king was astonished and thought the teachers might have taught this to his son and wanted to punish them. But Prahlada told that he was inspired by Vishnu only and requested him not to punish the teachers as they were not at fault. Hiranyakasipu asked his son to worship him only as he was the lord of all the worlds or Siva, who was capable of bestowing boons. The teachers also advised the same. But Prahlada reiterated that "Vishnu was the only supreme Lord and was the sole refugee"<sup>69</sup> and gave a sermon on Vishnu's glory. Hiranyakasipu became furious and ordered to kill Prahlada. All the attempts of the demons to kill him became futile. Then Hiranyakasipu demanded Prahlada to show Vishnu if he was Omnipresent in the pillar of assembly hall and also said that he was unconquerable by the boon of Siva and if Vishnu was really omnipotent he had to establish it by defeating him. He also threatened to kill

<sup>67</sup> The Padmapurana. VI. Ch. 265

<sup>68</sup> रुद्र उवाच

भ्रातरं निहतं ज्ञात्वा हिरण्यकशिपुस्ततः

तपस्तेपे महादैत्यो मेरोर्पार्थं च मां प्रति ॥ ibid. VI. 265. 1

<sup>69</sup> नारायणः परं ब्रह्म तत्त्वं नारायणः परम् । ibid. VI. 265.36

Prahlada, if he failed to show Vishnu in the pillar. When he struck the pillar with his fist, a terrible sound was produced from the pillar that was struck by him and the demons fell down being unable to bear the sound. At once Lord Vishnu assuming the form of Narasimha manifested there and Prahlada observed the whole universe in Narasimha<sup>70</sup>. Narasimha burnt all the demons from the flames coming out of his mane and then caught hold of the demon king and by placing him on his lap tore off his body with his sharp nails, which were neither animate nor inanimate. He wore the entrails round his neck as garland.<sup>71</sup> Because of the dreadful appearance of Narasimha, no deity including Brahma and Siva could approach him. Then the Gods meditated upon Goddess Lakshmi and requested her to pacify the Lord. She requested Narasimha to pacify himself and seeing his consort, he cooled down. He made her to sit on his lap and appeared in a pleasing manner. This pastime is called 'Lakshmi Narasimha'. He granted boons to all the Gods and the Gods made Prahlada successor of his father's throne. Narasimha granted the desired boon to Prahlada and also liberation in due course and vanished.

In this version, the noteworthy change is that Siva granted boon to Hiranyakasipu whereas it is Brahma, who granted boon in all other versions of this myth. Hiranyakasipu's character had undergone a slight change. In the Vishnupurana he became furious all of a sudden as soon as hearing the Vishnu's praise by his son, while in this version he tried to change his attitude, but when Prahlada reiterated again and again his undaunted devotion to Vishnu, he became furious and ordered to kill his son. More over he embraced his son and made him to sit on his lap after his return from *gurukula*, which shows the natural affection of a

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. VI. 265.102-111

<sup>71</sup> आकृष्यान्ननि दीर्घानि कन्ठे संसक्तवान् प्रियात् ००० I ibid VI. 265. 123

father for his son. Here it is clear that the reason for killing Hiranyakasipu is for his torture of his son Prahlada only but not the oppression of the deities, which is evident by the demon king's order to show Vishnu in the pillar of assembly hall or otherwise Prahlada, had to face death. Immediately, when Hiranyakasipu was about to kill Prahlada, Lord Vishnu manifested in Narasimha form to protect his devotee. This is a significant change from earlier versions. So, Bhakti became the most important thing to Vishnu to manifest immediately rather than the oppressions of seers and deities. Further, the myth of the present *khanda* is really an improved version of the earlier one. It can be observed a complete change in the case of Prahlada i.e., he was a demon with usual demonic nature, though he had a vision of universal form in Narasimha in the earlier version, whereas here he was a child and a true devotee of Vishnu right from birth. This might have happened because of the working of two different redactors just like it happened in the case of the *Harivamsa* and the *Sivapurana*. The Bhakti cult might have played a role in bringing out this change.

#### **14) The Narasimhapurana:**

The myth of Narasimha in the *Narasimhapurana* is slightly different<sup>72</sup>. Hiranyakasipu observed penance for Brahma and obtained boon. He established his sovereignty all over the three worlds and ordered to worship him only and none else. All the deities headed by Siva approached Vishnu and praised Him with *Satanamastotra*. Vishnu, knowing the purpose of their arrival, proclaimed that the demon king would be killed by him when he tortures his son Prahlada.<sup>73</sup>

When Hiranyakasipu started to go to perform penance once again, his relatives and well wishers prevented him because of the evil

<sup>72</sup> The Narasimhapurana Chaps 40-44

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 40.61-69

portents appeared at that time. But ignoring their words, Hiranyakasipu went to *Kailasa* Mountain and started penance. Then Brahma and Narada planned to disturb his penance since it would create some more troubles to Gods and seers. Both taking the forms of sparrows sat on a branch of a tree near the place where Hiranyakasipu was performing penance. Narada uttered loudly the mantra "नमो नारायणाय" thrice. Soon after hearing the mantra, Hiranyakasipu got disturbed and tried to hit the sparrows with an arrow, but failed. He returned home being disturbed.<sup>74</sup> On that night being asked by his queen, Hiranyakasipu narrated the matter to her. By just hearing the Narayanamantra alone, she got conceived and gave birth to Prahlada, a true devotee of Vishnu. Prahlada, while undergoing studies was asked by his father to recite a lesson. Prahlada praised the greatness of Vishnu. Though the demon king was annoyed by hearing Prahlada's eulogy of Vishnu, did not express ill feelings immediately and tried to change his son's attitude. He sent Prahlada to gurukula again. While in *gurukula*, Prahlada gave sermon on the devotion of Vishnu and Vaishnavism to his classmates. When his class mates asked how he knew all this, Prahlada revealed the anecdote related to his birth: Once when Hiranyakasipu was performing Penance, Indra abducted his wife and was carrying her away with him. Then Narada came across and told that she was carrying a child in her womb, who was a true devotee of Vishnu and because of whom only Hiranyakasipu would be killed by Vishnu. Indra released her and Narada took her with him to his hermitage and imparted the devotion of Vishnu to the child in womb, who was none other than Prahlada.<sup>75</sup> But when there was no change in his attitude, then Hiranyakasipu became furious and tortured him in several ways. But all attempts failed.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 41.9-19

<sup>75</sup> Ibid 43. 17-24

When Prahlada was tied up and thrown into sea to kill him by the attendants of his father, he meditated on Vishnu and came out of ocean unharmed. Vishnu appeared in his usual form to Prahlada as soon as he came out of the ocean and granted two boons, his everlasting devotion to Vishnu and permanent liberation. Vishnu also assured that he would manifest again shortly and kill Hiranyakasipu. As soon as Prahlada returned home, Hiranyakasipu asked him to show Vishnu in the Pillar of Hall, if he was Omnipresent. At once, when Prahlada remembered Lord's assurance, the pillar had broken into two parts and Narasimha came out of it. Narasimha, after slaying all the demons easily dragged Hiranyakasipu to the threshold of the palace and keeping him on his lap, tore off the demon king with his sharp nail. As he was being torn off, the demon king Hiranyakasipu himself expressed his surprise that "the tusks of *Airavata* and even the *Parasu* of Siva could not affect him, his chest now is being torn off by the nails of Narasimha very easily. Oh! Probably when the fate is not favoured a wise person can be insulted by a blade of grass"<sup>76</sup>. At the end of the version an interesting point is made that Lord Narasimha was settled on *Srisailem* Mountain for the welfare of his devotees and for the destruction of the wicked.<sup>77</sup>

In this version, the reason for killing Hiranyakasipu is expressively stated here for torturing his son, whereas it was implied in Sixth Khanda of the *Padmapurana*. Yet another development in this version is Prahlada's self revelation of the background story of his birth. It makes

<sup>76</sup> यत्राखिल दन्तिदन्तमुसलान्याखन्डितान्याहवे  
 ०० धारा यत्र पिनाकपाणि परशोराकुन्ठतामगमत् ॥००००००००॥  
 तन्मे तावदुरोन्सिंहकरजैव्यादीर्यते साम्प्रतं  
 दैवे दुर्जनतां गते तृणमपि प्रायोऽप्यवजायते ०० ००००००००॥ ibid. 44. 30  
 Here in the text 'तृणमपि' is used, but 'तृणमिव' will be better reading.

<sup>77</sup> श्रीशैल शिखरं प्रप्य विसृतः सुरपूजितः ।  
 स्थितो भक्तहितार्थाय अभक्तानां क्षयाय च ॥ ibid. 44. 39



us to understand the reason for the undaunted devotion of Prahlada on Vishnu without demoniac nature, though Prahlada was just a child and born in a demon race. Here also Hiranyakasipu did not express his ill feelings as soon as hearing his son's eulogy of Vishnu's glory, but tried to change his attitude first and when he failed to budge from his devotion to Vishnu, then attempted to kill him. This establishes the natural fatherly affection like in sixth khanda of the *Padmapurana*. Like in the *Vishnupurana*, here also Prahlada gave sermon on the devotion of Vishnu and Vaishnavism to his classmates, which helps for popularity of Vaishnavism. It is found here also Vishnu appearing before Prahlada in his usual yellow robes, when the latter comes out of the ocean like in the *Vishnupurana*, but only difference is in this *purana*, Prahlada did not ask to pardon his father for torturing him and it is evident from Vishnu's statement in the beginning made to Gods the reason for killing Hiranyakasipu is for torturing Prahlada only in this version.

#### **15) The Bhagavatapurana:**

Now we come across a well developed and a popular story of Narasimha in the *Bhagavatapurana*.<sup>78</sup> In the first chapter of seventh *skanda*, the background story of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksa is given. Jaya and Vijaya, the door keepers of *Vaikuntha* of Vishnu were cursed to take birth as demons three times by the sages Sanaka and others for not allowing them to see Vishnu. Being persuaded by them, the sages modified the curse that though they take birth as demons and hate Vishnu, they always think of him and attain their original positions after three births. Accordingly, in their first birth they were Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksa; in the second Ravana and Kumbhakarna and in the third Sisupala and Dantavakra.

While in some of the earlier *puranas*, it was just stated the reason for Hiranyakasipu's hatred towards Vishnu was his brother Hiranyaksa's death at the hands of Vishnu, here in this version it is explained clearly at length. He addressed the demons and said that though Vishnu was supposed to be impartial towards both deities and demons, he actually was at that time in favour of deities. Hence Vishnu needs to be killed and to offer oblations to his brother with the blood of Vishnu by cutting down his neck with his trident. He ordered the demons to kill the sacrificers and the devotees of Vishnu and to upset the religious order. The demons carried out the orders. Hiranyakasipu consoled the family members, who were grief stricken at the death of Hiranyaksa. In this context, he gave a lengthy philosophical discourse stating that the death was inevitable and referred to the story of Suyagna.<sup>79</sup> Hiranyakasipu to make himself immortal, invincible and to establish sovereignty over the three worlds, started a severe penance towards Brahma on *Mandara* Mountain. He continued Penance for several years and was covered with ant hills. His flesh, blood, etc., were eaten away by the white ants. When he was performing austerities, a smoky fire arose from his head and all the worlds were agitated by that heat. Finally, Brahma appeared himself before the demon king and told that he was pleased by his penance. He sprinkled water on Hiranyakasipu and at once the demon king felt refreshed and became more vigorous

Being asked by Brahma to ask a boon, Hiranyakasipu asked that "he should not be killed by any being created by him; either indoor or outdoor; during night or day; on the earth or in the sky; by animate or inanimate. He also demanded for a matchless might in the battle and sovereignty over all the worlds. He wished for the glory of the guardian of the world and finally announced that whatever Brahma possessed

<sup>79</sup> Ibid VII 2.20.61

should be passed on to him<sup>80</sup> Brahma granted and disappeared. The demon king, having obtained the invincible boon, increased his vengeance and enmity against Vishnu. He ruled from heaven dethroning Indra and all the Gods except the Trinity surrendered to him including the nature elements. When the gods requested Vishnu, he being invisible announced that he would slay Hiranyakasipu when the latter torture his son Prahlada, who was his true devotee.<sup>81</sup> Having heard the words of Vishnu, all the gods sighed in relief as if the demon king was already killed.

Like in the *Vishnu*, the *Siva (Satarudrasamhita)*, the *Harivamsa (Bhavisyaparva)* and the *Narasimhapuranas*, here also Prahlada was a child and was being trained by Sanda and Amarka, the sons of Sukracharya, the demon preceptor. Here also, when once Prahlada visited his father, he was asked to recite a lesson. Prahlada replied that the people unnecessarily feel proud and that such people should go to the forest to meditate on Hari. Unlike the earlier versions, here Hiranyakasipu just smiled (may be with a feeling it was just a childish act, but not intentional) and sent him back to his teachers. There the teachers threatened him to forget Vishnu and taught him the *Trivarga* i.e. *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. Again on Prahlada's second visit, Hiranyakasipu asked the same question and Prahlada replied that the nine fold devotion to Vishnu was the only way to get liberation<sup>82</sup>. Now Hiranyakasipu became furious and asked him where from he learnt all this nonsense. Prahlada replied that the worship of Vishnu only leads to liberation and the persons who had confused conception and rush up for the worldly pleasures by not realizing Vishnu, fall in a pit just like a blind person led by another blind person. Irritated Hiranyakasipu

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. VII. 3.35-38

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. VII. 4. 25-28

<sup>82</sup> श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ॥

अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥ ibid . VII. 5.23

ordered to kill Prahlada. Observing the failed attempts of him attendants, Hiranyakasipu was afraid and suspected that his fury against his son may lead to his death.<sup>83</sup> On the advice of the teachers, Prahlada was again sent back to the *ashram*. There Prahlada in the absence of his teachers used to deliver sermons on the devotion to Vishnu. Being asked by his classmates as to how learnt all those when teachers were not told, Prahlada narrated the background story that lead to his birth here also just similar to the version of the Narasimhapurana. Here it was added explicitly that it had shown effect on the children. They had forgotten all the lessons imparted to them by the teachers and their mind bent towards attaching themselves to Vishnu. In this version Prahlada's discourse on vaishnavism was given at length. The teachers reported the matter to the demon king.

Hiranyakasipu called his son and rebuked him for his devotion to Vishnu and asked the source of his strength and Prahlada replied that the Supreme Lord Vishnu was the source of his strength and in fact the source of the entire universe as well. Then, Hiranyakasipu ordered his son to show the Lord Vishnu in a nearby pillar of the hall, if Vishnu was all-pervasive failing which he would kill him. He said "Let Hari who is your protector come to protect you". Then he jumped from his throne and struck the pillar with his fist<sup>84</sup>.

At once, the pillar that was struck by the demon king burst with a terrible sound and as if to testify the words of his devotee and to establish his omnipotence, Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha manifested from the Pillar. Here Narasimha was described briefly but the sharp nails of Narasimha got proper share, which served as weapons for killing Hiranyakasipu. When Narasimha killed all the demons with his usual weapons like cakra etc, Hiranyakasipu doubted

<sup>83</sup> नूनमेतद्विरोधेन मृत्युर्मे भविता न वा । ibid VII 5.47

<sup>84</sup> Ibid VII 8.15

that he might also be killed, but did not hesitate to fight. Narasimha caught hold of the demon king, dragged him to the threshold of the palace and by placing him on his lap tore him off with his sharp nails. Then he put the entrails of Hiranyakasipu around his neck like a garland. Thus Vishnu, in the process of killing the demon king fulfilled all the conditions under which the demon could not be killed.

After putting the entrails of the demon king round his neck he sat on a beautiful throne. No deity could approach him because of his awesome and dreadful form. Even Goddess Lakshmi was afraid to approach him, while she was the one who pacified the wrathful form of Narasimha in Sixth *Khanda* of the *Padmapurana*.

Brahma requested Prahlada to pacify Narasimha, who was in awful form. Then Prahlada prayed the Lord at length and the lord was pacified and his anger vanished. This very fact that the other two members of Trinity viz Brahma and Siva and even his own consort Goddess Lakshmi could not approach him because of Lord Narasimha's dreadful form and pacify, but Prahlada, a true devotee could do it clearly establishes the prominence of '*bhakti*' (emotional surrender) to Vishnu as the best way for liberation. Being compelled by Vishnu, Prahlada asked the boon for the complete eradication of worldly desires from his mind and everlasting devotion on him <sup>85</sup> He also requested Vishnu to pardon the sins committed by his father for defying the Supreme Lord and for torturing him. Vishnu told that twenty one generations of Hiranyakasipu had been sanctified, because of the birth of Prahlada, his devotee in the family. This myth is certainly more polished than that of the *Vishnupurana*, where Hiranyakasipu was pardoned, when he was alive. Narasimha asked Prahlada to occupy the throne for a period of one *manvantara* only and after which he could

<sup>85</sup> कामानां हृद्यसमोहं भवतस्तु वृणे वरम् । Ibid VII. 10.7

attain liberation and instructed to perform last rites to his father. Brahma came forward then and praised the Lord wherein he said "who ever meditates on this form of yours, shall be protected from all the dangers and from the clutches of the death".<sup>86</sup> This helped the practical application of the myth in day to day life.

In the *Harivamsa* (*Bhavisyaparva*), Vishnu went to Himalayas to contemplate on the method of killing Hiranyakasipu, but in the *Sivapurana* (*Satarudrasamhita*), Sixth *Khanda* of the *Padmapurana*, the *Narasimhapurana* and in this *Bhagavatapurana*, Vishnu even did not enter in to the assembly hall, but all of a sudden He manifested himself in a pillar, which helped to establish his omni-presence and omnipotence firmly. So it helped us to know that Vaishnavism was on its full swing, when *Puranas* were redacted.

In the earlier versions, Vishnu appeared to the Gods and assured them that he would kill the demon king, when they approached him to report the atrocities. But in this version, he was invisible even to the Gods and assured them by a divine voice only. So here Vishnu's super eminent power even over other gods was established very effectively. This may be the result of attempts to establish Vaishnavism as supreme over the other sects of Hinduism.

Thus the simple episode of the *Mahabharata* is developed to this extent in the *Bhagavatapurana*, where we find a very descriptive account of Narasimha myth. After examining all the above versions, we can come to a conclusion that there is a gradual development in the character of Prahlada. Briefly the development can be classified into four stages. In the first stage, Prahlada had no place in the episode at all like in the *Mahabharata*, the *Vayupurana*, the *Brahmandapurana*, the

<sup>86</sup> Ibid VII. 10.9

*Brahmapurana*, the *Harivamsaparva* of *Harivamsa* and the *Vishnudharmottarapurana*. The second stage is that where prahlada appears but does not have devotion to Vishnu and with demoniac nature, but how ever visualizes universal form in Vishnu, when He appeared as in fifth *khanda* of the *Padmapurana*, the *Matsyapurana*. The third stage is that Prahlada does not have devotion to Vishnu at first and even fought with him and after the fight; he realizes Him as the supreme god and starts meditation on him like in the *Saurapurana*, the *Kurmapurana*, *Bhavisyaparva* of the *Harivamsa*, and *Rudrasamhita* of the *Sivapurana*. In all these stages Prahlada was a grown up person. The fourth and final stage is that Prahlada was a child and a devotee of Vishnu from the beginning. This aspect is very popular among the masses. Prahlada of this character can be seen in *Satarudrasamhita* of the *Sivapurana*, the *Lingapurana*, and sixth *khanda* of the *Padmapurana*, the *Vishnupurana*, the *Narasimhapurana* and the *Bhagavatapurana*. In *Satarudrasamhita* of the *Sivapurana* and the *Lingapurana*, of course we don't find the torturing of Prahlada by Hiranyakasipu for his devotion to Vishnu explicitly.

This kind of shift in the myth viz., the reason of killing Hiranyakasipu of the *Mahabharata* "I shall kill Hiranyakasipu as he destroys the sacrifices" totally converting into "Hiranyakasipu will be killed when he tortures his son Prahlada, who is a true devotee of Vishnu" in the *Bhagavatapurana* vouch safe the development of Bhakti Cult. To make the Bhakti Cult aspect popular here in this myth Prahlada's character is made to undergo various changes by turning him into a child and make him face so many torments at the hands of his father with undaunted devotion to Vishnu. Bhakti aspect has taken front seat even in relegating the oppression of righteousness.

In addition to the above context of the destruction of the demon king Hiranyakasipu, the Narasimha myth continued again in totally different context in later Puranas like in the *Saura*, the *Surya*, the *Kurma*, the *Garuda* and the *Matsyapuranas*. Let us have a glimpse over this later part of the myth.

### **The Saurapurana:**

According to the *Saurapurana*,<sup>87</sup> when Hiranyakasipu was killed, Prahlada became king. Once, by the illusion caused by gods, Prahlada insulted a Brahmin, who in turn cursed him to loose his devotion to Vishnu by which he became proud and insulted others. Prahlada influenced by the *tamasaguna* fought with Vishnu to retaliate his father's death and being defeated, once again realized Vishnu's glory and surrendered to him. Later Andhaka became king. Once Siva, while going out for alms instructed Vishnu and other gods to protect Parvati in the guise of women attendants. He also placed his *ganas* with Nandi and Bhairava as door keepers. Meantime Andhaka came to elope Parvati and was fell on the ground being kicked by Kalabhairava. Gaining consciousness, Andhaka came back again and kicked Bhairava and the *ganas*.<sup>88</sup> Seeing that Vishnu created *Sakthi* and defeated the demon and the same was informed to Siva after his return. When Andhaka came again and attacked on the advice of Vishnu, Siva sent Kalabhairava to kill the demon. Kalabhairava pierced the demon with the trident and danced joyfully. Andhaka then praised Siva at length and surrendered to Siva. Siva was pleased at his devotion and made him *Ganadhyaksa* on par with Nandisvara and named him *Brngi*.<sup>89</sup> Here it is stated that the *Sakti* of Vishnu and Bhairava joined together and came to know by a single name as Kalagni-Bhairava, which is nothing but

<sup>87</sup> The Saurapurana. 29<sup>th</sup> chapter

<sup>88</sup> भैरवं ताडयामास तथा चान्यगणेश्वरान् । ibid 29. 17a

<sup>89</sup> Ibid 29.43



Narasimha himself.<sup>90</sup> It is stated that worshipping any one of them would be considered as the worship of other deity also and also stated that a person who sees difference between them would be facing difficulties and had to repent.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Kurmapurana:**

The version of this myth found in the *Kurmapurana*<sup>92</sup> is almost similar to the *Saurapurana*. Hiranyaksha, who ran away, being afraid of Narsimha after fighting with him returned back again after Narasimha disappeared. Prahlada coronated Hiranyaksha as successor of Hiranyakasipu. He begot a son by name Andhaka by pleasing Siva with his penance. Hiranyaksha also tortured the sages and having conquered the Gods and imprisoning Indra, carried away the earth to *Patala*. Then Vishnu in the form of Varaha (boar) killed Hiranyaksha and restored the earth.

Prahlada, the devotee of Vishnu as a successor of Hiranyaksha ruled the demons without demonic nature. As in the *Saurapurana* here also by the curse of a Brahmin, Prahlada lost his devotion to Vishnu by illusion and fought with Vishnu to take revenge for the death of his father. After the fight he surrenders and continues to be the faithful devotee to Vishnu till the end. After Prahlada, Andhaka became the king of demons and he wanted to elope Parvati. Siva, while going out for alms placed Parvati under the protection of Vishnu, who assumed the form of a female attended on Parvati<sup>93</sup>. Bhairava and Nandi were also ordered to take care of Parvati. Meantime Andhaka came to the *Mandara Mountain* to carry away Parvati. Bhairava in the form of Kala

<sup>90</sup> एकैव मूर्तिरभ्यतयोर्भैरवशाङ्गिर्गणोः ॥ ॥  
कालाग्निभैरवो यो सौ स एव नृहरिः स्वयम् ॥ *ibid* 29.49

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*. 29.50-53.

<sup>92</sup> *The Kurmapurana*. I. 15.89-237.

<sup>93</sup> स्त्रीरूपधारी नियतं सेवतेस्म महेश्वरीम् | *ibid* I.15.122b.

attacked Andhaka which lead to a terrible fight. Then bull ensigned Lord struck the demon by piercing a spear into his heart<sup>94</sup>. Then Andhaka created thousands of Andhakas, who vanquished Nandi and *Ganas* like Ghantakarna etc. Then Bhairava sought the help of Vishnu. Vishnu created hundred goddesses who could defeat the army of Andhaka. Immediately, Andhaka ran away from the battle field. Siva was informed of the victory after his return. Again Andhaka came back to carry away Parvati then Siva with Vishnu, Kala-Bhairava, *matrkas* (matriarchs) advanced for encounter. Andhaka vanquished all the *ganas* and *matrkas* and stood before Kala-rudra. Vishnu advised Kala-Bhairava to kill the demon king. Immediately, Siva in the form of Kalagni-Rudra pierced Andhaka on the tip of his trident and danced<sup>95</sup>. Andhaka being pierced by the trident, by the mere touch of it all his sins had become cleared off and he began to praise the Lord Siva at length. Siva being pleased took him off his trident and made him one of his *Gana* chief. Bhairava form of Rudra along with matriarchs went to Netherlands and Kalagni-rudra form of Siva merged within himself. The matriarchs created by Vishnu being hungry began to eat up all the three worlds. Then Lord Bhairava bowed to Vishnu who was in the form of Narasimha. Witnessing the association of Bhairava and Narasimha, matriarchs calmed down and bestowed their power on Bhairava. As a result, both the manifestations of Narasimha and Bhairava forms were became united<sup>96</sup>.

The salient feature in this version is that Andhaka was stated as the son of Hiranyaksa born by the grace of Lord Siva. This helps us to understand his repentance after his defeat and was being made as *ganadhyaksa* at the end.

<sup>94</sup> शूलेनोरसि तं दैत्यमाजघान वृषभध्यजः । Ibid I. 15.127

<sup>95</sup> त्रिशूलाग्रेषु विन्यस्य प्रणर्तत । Ibid I.15.184.

<sup>96</sup> अपश्यन्तं जगन्मूर्तिं नृसिंहमथ भैरवम् ।

क्षणदेकत्वमापन्नं शेषार्हिं चापि मातरः ॥ Ibid I.15.229

## The *Matsyapurana*:

The *Matsyapurana*<sup>97</sup> too bring out a synthesis between Bhairava and Narasimha.

According to the *Matsyapurana* the demon king Andhaka did penance and became invincible to the Gods. Once he saw Parvati wandering with Lord Siva and wanted to get her. There was a terrible fight between lord Siva and Andhaka in *Mahakalavana* in *Avanti* country. Siva was severely tortured by the demon king Andhaka<sup>98</sup>. Siva hurled Pasupatastra, which injured the demon. But from the blood that dropped on the ground from his body began to produce several Andhakas. To counter them, Siva created 189 *Matrkas*<sup>99</sup> (matriarchs) like Maheswari etc. to see that the blood of the demon should not fall on the ground as to prevent the creation of new Andhakas. Those terrible Matriarchs drank the blood of the demon for some period and were fully satisfied. When they were satisfied completely, again new Andhakas began to be created from the blood of the demon and they started to torture Siva. Being worried by those Andhakas, Siva sought the help of Vishnu, who created Goddess Suskarevati, who started to lick the blood of Andhaka. The more she drinks the blood, the more emaciated she was and did not allow the blood of Andhaka to fall on the ground<sup>100</sup>. In the absence of the creation of new Andhakas, Siva killed all the Andhakas and finally destroyed the original Andhaka with his trident. By the mere touch of the trident, Andhaka transformed into a devotee of Siva and praised him at length. Siva was pleased and blessed him with the lordship over his *ganas*.

<sup>97</sup> The *Matyapurana* 178 chapter

<sup>98</sup> अस्मिन्युदे तदा रुदधान्धकेनातिपीडितः 1 ibid 178.b

<sup>99</sup> The main Matriarchs created by Siva are 1) ब्राह्मी 2) महेश्वरी 3) कौमारी 4) वैष्णवी 5) वराही 6) इन्द्राणी (शक्री) and 7) यामुन्डी. Twenty-six assistant Matriarchs are created for each of the above.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid 178.36.

Then all the 189 matriarchs created by Siva earlier requested permission to swallow the whole worlds to pacify their hunger. When it appears that they were not in a mood to head the advice of Siva, who is always for the welfare of the universe, Siva contemplated on Narasimha with his special features for the rescue.<sup>101</sup> Lord Narasimha appeared before Siva as contemplated. Even gods were not in a position to gaze at the form of Narasimha. After due prayer, Siva informed him that the 189 Matriarchs created by him to kill Andhaka were now after swallowing the whole world ignoring his advice and he was unable to control them. At once Narasimha created Vanisvari from his tongue, Maya from his heart and Bhagamalini from his male organ (*Guhyanga*). Kasiki was already created from his bones, who drank the blood of Andhakas in the name of Suskarevati<sup>102</sup>. To these four *saktis*, he again created from his limbs 32 divine *saktis* as companions at the rate of eight for each<sup>103</sup>. All these 32 divine *saktis* ferociously marched and defeated the matriarchs created by Siva. Narasimha instructed them to protect the universe in stead of harassing them. If they did so they would be worshipped on par with other *saktis*. Siva benevolently transferred their forms as benign from malignant along with other gods. It is stated that those who worship Suskarevati would get children.

## 16) The *Garudapurana*:

To the story of the *Matsyapurana*, the *Garudapurana* contributes a beautiful *stotra* of Narasimha from the mouth of Siva.<sup>104</sup> This version

<sup>101</sup> Ibid 178.44-51

<sup>102</sup> Ibid 178.63-64

<sup>103</sup> 1) घन्टाकर्णी 2) त्रैलोक्यमोहिणी 3) सर्वसतशङ्करी 4) चक्रहृदया 5) कामचारिणी 6) शङ्खिणी 7) लेखिनी, 8) कालसंघर्षिणी- under वाणीश्वरी ; 1) संकर्षिणी 2) अश्वत्था 3) बीजभावी 4) अपराजिता 5) कल्याणी 6) मधुदंष्ट्री 7) कमला 8) उत्पलहस्तिका -under माया ; 1) अजिता 2) सूक्ष्महृदया 3) वृद्धा 4) वेशास्वदंशना 5) नृसिंहभैरवा 6) बिल्वा 7) गरुत्महृदया 8) जया-under भगमालिनी; and 1) आकर्षिणी 2) सम्भ्राता 3) उत्तरमालिका 4) ज्वालामुखी 5) भीषणिका 6) कामधेनु 7) बालिका 8) पद्मकरा-under काशिकी/ शुष्करेवती

<sup>104</sup> The Garuda Purana. Part I. 231 Chapter.

started with the matriarchs created by Siva who expressed their desire to gulp all the three worlds. Siva contemplated Vishnu in the form of Narsimha with the special features of the lord.<sup>105</sup> When Narasimha appears, Siva praised a *stuti* in honour of Narasimha.<sup>106</sup> On the request of Siva, Narasimha's vagisvari with furious tongue destroyed all the matriarchs and restores peace in the world.<sup>107</sup> Here, only Vagisvari is said to have controlled all the matriarchs. It is stated in the *phalasaruti* that one, who reads this *stotra* with controlled senses, would obtain the desired object without doubt.

The *Narasimhastuti* before and after the appearance of Narasimha found in both the *Matyapurana* and the *Garudapurana* are almost similar with even parallel lines with minute changes. This *stuti* contains several iconographical features of Narasimha.

Now it would be appropriate to deal with the association of Sarabha and Narasimha Matriarchs in the light of the above mythical background. The fabulous Sarabha has to be distinguished from the real animals of that name. The *Taittiriya Samhita* IV.2.10 mentions, the *Aranya* (or wild) *Sarabha* along with *Mayura* (peacock), *Goura* (wild buffalo), *Gavya* (a kind of wild ox) and *Ushtra* (camel). Sarabha in the Vedas is a kind of deer as found in Dr. MacDonnell's dictionary, while it is a fabulous eight legged animal in mythology<sup>108</sup>. The *Vacaspatya* mentions Sarabha as a kind of deer, a young elephant, a kind of monkey and a camel. He also quotes a text to show a fabulous Sarabha is *Astapad* (having eight legs, four of which upwards) and upwards eyes. The *Mahabharata* also mentions a fabulous Sarabha<sup>109</sup> with upwards eyes, eight legs, capable of even killing the lion that can kill

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. part I. 231. 6-9

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. part I. 231. 12-17

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. part I. 231. 20-21

<sup>108</sup> Narayan Aiyengar, *Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology*, p250

<sup>109</sup> M. Bh. Aranyaparva 13.4.15

elephant. There is also a spider '*Urnanabhi*' called as *Astapad* with eight legs and this insect which sends forth and withdraws its threads has the distinction of being used as a simile to the Supreme Lord who sends forth the universe and withdraws himself at the time of creation and destruction respectively

The word '*Sara-bha*' itself can be construed as 'the arrow-beast' and can be taken as 'killer of lion'. In the Vedas, Rudra is the famous archer and is called '*mrgavyadha*' shooting the stag of sacrifice. Though *mrga* is generally applied to the deer, the general name can be applicable to all the wild animals including that of a lion. This might have prompted the worshippers of Siva to address him as *Mrgavyadha*. Rudra might deserve that name better by killing a greater *mrga* than just a deer. We find in puranic legends Siva killing an *asura* (demon), who had the form of elephant (*Gajasura*). After killing the elephant, the next higher stage is a lion, so to fulfill this it can be assumed that *mrgavyadha*(Rudra) was made to conceive as the lion killing Sarabha with eight legs as might had been the evolution of the concept of Sarabha alias *Mrgavyadha*. It seems that he was let loose into the jungle of myths as a beast surpassing all the *mrgas* including that of the lion, its king.<sup>110</sup> It is probable that thus evolved lion-killing Sarabha might have influenced the votaries of Saivism to adopt the idea of Rudra as Sarabha, when the Narasimha story became much popular to counter Vaishnavism.

'*Paramavaidika Siddhanta Tatva Ratnakara*'<sup>111</sup> is based on the verse in *Taittiriya Aranyaka*-

<sup>110</sup> Narayan Aiyengar, *Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology*, p251

<sup>111</sup> A written manuscript available at Oriental Research Institute, Sri Venkatesvara University, Tirupati without authorship. However Narayan Aiyengar in his *Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology* mentions author as one Ramanujacarya (of late origin) Son of Sribhasyan Jagannadhacarya. P 251

"हरिं हरन्तं अनुयाति देवः । विश्वस्येशानं वृषभं मतीनाम् ॥" iii.15.1

and quoting certain slokas said to be in the *Vishnudharmottarapurana*, the *Agnipurana*, in elucidation of the above quoted verse, attempts to establish the idea that seeing the Man-Lion Vishnu (Narasimha) Rudra Sarabha came roaring terribly, but the Man-Lion Vishnu killed him and was praised by devas. He quotes a verse to the same effect said to be in the *Garudapurana*<sup>112</sup> and a long verse said to be in the *Narasimhapurana*, which changes the man-lion into a figure called *Gandabherundasimha* with eight faces- of lion, tiger, boar, monkey, horse, eagle, bear and another (not mentioned) and with thirty-two hands holding all kinds of weapons and putting down the pride of Sarabha.<sup>113</sup> The followers of *Saivism* construe the same verse as that "the devas followed the most wise lord of universe, who is killing the lion (Vishnu in Narasimha form)."<sup>114</sup>

However, the above Vedic verse can not vouchsafe any of the constructions, since neither the Narasimha story nor the Sarabha story had arisen by the time of that Vedic text. The Vedic text simply compares and praises the wise lord of all as the mighty lion that kills (enemy). It may be compared with the similar praises of Vishnu and Rudra in the *Rg-Veda*. The *Rg-Veda* i.154 .2, wherein Vishnu is said that his might is like fearful, prowling, wild-beast, located in mountains; whereas Rudra is described elsewhere in the words "praise him the chariot borne, the young, the famous, fierce, slaying like a dread beast of the forest"<sup>115</sup>.

The episode of Narasimha's wrath not pacifying even after the death of Hiranyakasipu and Siva in the form of Sarabha controlling him

<sup>112</sup> हन्तुं अभ्यागतं रुद्रं शरभं नृकेशरिः नखैर्विदारयामास हिरण्यकशिपुं यथा । ibid

<sup>113</sup> वन्दे .....शरभमदहरं गन्डभेरुन्डसिंहम् । ibid

<sup>114</sup> Narayan Aiyengar, *Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology*. P 252

<sup>115</sup> *Rg-Veda*. LI.33.11

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found in the *Sivapurana* and in the *Lingapurana* might be the result of *Saivism* trying to establish the supremacy of Siva over the other two Gods in trinity i.e., Brahma and Vishnu as it was, most probably consolidated in its present form in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. as viewed by Dr. Puspender Kumar in his introduction to the *Sivapurana*.<sup>116</sup>

As if to counter this advancement of an attempt to gain supremacy of *saivism* over *vaisnavism* by induction of Sarabha episode, it appears that the episode of Narasimha controlling the Matriarchs created by Siva, when the latter failed to control them and extending a helping hand to Siva was an attempt of *vaisnavaites*.

By close observation of the above arguments, it can be construed that the Sarabha and Matriarchs episode found in a few *Puranas* might be the interpolations by the sectarian votaries i.e. *Saivism* and *Vaisnavism*. It can be seen that in both the episodes, an attempt is made to establish supremacy of one sect over the other. However the praise worthy thing to note is that in no where antagonism is shown against each other. More efforts were made to bring out a harmony between the popular sects including *Saktism*. The concluding remarks clearly and explicitly state at the end that the prayer to one (sarabha) belongs to another (Narasimha) also and mere ignoring one deemed to be insulting the other. In the Matriarchs episode it is shown that both *Kalabhairava* and Narasimha have merged into one form to become *Kalagnibhairava*.

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<sup>116</sup> Introduction P IX, The *Sivapurana*. Part I. Ed. By Dr. Puspender Kumar, Nag Publications, Delhi-7, 1986





CHAPTER II  
NARASIMHA IN AGAMIC  
AND TANTRIC TEXTS

## CHAPTER II

### NARASIMHA IN AGAMIC AND TANTRIC TEXTS

An attempt is being made to study Narasimha in agamic and tantric texts. *Agama* means 'well-structured and traditionally communicated wisdom' derived from the root 'गम्' with prefix 'आ' and related to the worship of god in an image. *Agamas* are another class of scriptures developed almost parallel to Vedic texts. The agmas are theological treatises and practical manuals of idol worship. *Agamas* also deal with the *Mantra* and the *Yantras*. These treatises explain the external worship of God in idols. Generally the contents of the agamas are dealt with under four topics viz. 1) *jnana* (knowledge) 2) *yoga* (concentration) 3) *kriya* (*construction*) and 4) *carya* (rituals). They also deal with ontology, cosmology, devotion, meditation, philosophy of mantras, mystic diagrams, temple building, image making, domestic observance, social rules and public festivals etc.

The *agama* tradition is distinguished from Vedic tradition, which preaches the worship of the Almighty through the performance of sacrifices. In the course of time, the worship of the agamas has obtained the acceptance of the people and since it was not antagonist in spirit and nature, it has become a subsidiary culture within the Vedic frame work<sup>1</sup>. Thus the *Agamas* have become the texts of authority subsequently as that of the *Vedas*.

It is stated that the conduct of people must be in accordance with the *Vedas* in the *Krtayuga*; in accordance with the *Smrti* texts in the *Tretayuga*; in accordance with the *Puranas* in the *Dwaparayuga* and in accordance with the *Agamas* in the *Kaliyuga*.<sup>2</sup>

The *Agamas* are broadly divided into three schools: The *Vaishnava*, the *Saiva* and the *Sakta*. While the *Vaishnavagamas* glorify Vishnu as Supreme God, the *Saivagamas* glorify Siva and the *Saktagamas* glorify Sakti as Supreme. The *Vaishnavagamas* are of two kinds: viz. 1) *Vaikhanasa* and 2) *Pancaratra*.

### 1) **Vaikhanasa**

*Vaikhanasas* are believed to be a very ancient sect devoted to the cult of Vishnu. They are referred in the Vedic texts also. The *Vaikhanasa* outlook is remarkable for its reconciliation of the Vedic tradition with the tantric. The *Vaikhanasa* tradition originated from the teachings of the sage *Vikhanasa*, who is believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu and taught to his four disciples. Among the four disciples, it is stated that *Marici* wrote eight books called 'Samhitas' like *Jaya*, *Ananda*, *Samjnana* etc.; *Bhrgu* wrote ten books called 'Adhikaras' like *Khiladhikarana*, *Arcadhikara* etc.; *Atri* wrote four books called 'Tantra' like *Purva*, *Uttara* and *Vishnu*; and *Atreya* and *Kasyapa* wrote three books called 'Kanda' viz. *Satya*, *Dharma* and *Jnana*. Though the list appears to be exuberant, now available are very few.

It is note worthy to mention here that these *agama* texts do not deal with *Jnana* and *Yoga* sections separately, but deal with *Kriya* and *Carya* sections only.<sup>3</sup> This tradition classifies worship into two varieties: with icons (*samurtarcana*) and without icons (*amurtarcana*), but recommends former as better one in view of its easy acceptability and adoptability. In the latter method Vishnu is worshiped, who resides within the sacrificial fire as '*Antaryamin*', which is rather difficult for common people to conceive.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid pp. 115-116

## 2) *Pancaratra*

The *Pancaratra* view point upholds the supremacy of Vishnu and commands the devoted worship as a royal path for salvation. It is as old as the epic *Mahabharata*, but textual tradition is comparatively recent. The early *Pancaratra* texts are so comprehensive, elaborative and perfect that it had even influenced *Vaikhana* and *Saiva* agamas<sup>4</sup>. Different view points are found about the significance of the expression '*Pancaratra*'. Prof. K. S. Ramachandra Rao states that Vishnu taught this system to five sages, who were the incarnations of the five weapons of Vishnu daily day and night for five successive days, hence the name. The five disciples, the incarnations of weapons are *Sandilya* (Disc), *Aupagayana* (conch), *Maunijayana* (Mace), *Kausika* (Sword) and *Bharadvaja* (Bow). According to the *Vihagendrasamhita* the names of recipients of this agama are Ananta, Garuda, Vishvaksena (attendants of Vishnu), Brahma and Rudra. The *Pancaratra* texts generally deal with *Jnana*, *Yoga*, *Kriya* and *Carya* as mentioned supra.

The *Pancaratra* texts are of three types, 1) *Divya*, (directly communicated by the God) 2) *Munibhashita*, (composed by sages) and 3) *Manusha* (written by humans). The *Sattvatasamhita*, the *Paushkarasamhita* and the *Jayakhyasamhita* are of first group; the *Isvarasamhita*, the *Paramesvarasamhita*, the *Bharadvajasamhita* and the *Vaihayasasamhita* are of second group and the *Sanatkumarasamhita*, the *Padmodbhavasamhita* etc are of third group. Most of the texts of this tradition are voluminous works and deal with different topics in addition to the normal temple worship, iconography, iconometry, yantra, etc. Apart from these, these agamas contain topics like medicinal herbs, therapeutic procedures, folk cures etc.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p 116

The worship of a particular deity forms as an integral aspect of religion. In order to obtain long cherished objects, devotees are after worshipping their beloved deities in one form or other. Thus the agama texts prescribe a good number of objects of worship, which significantly represent both the deity to be worshipped and the fruits to be obtained. The images (*murtis*), a particular word consisting of a respective seed letter (*mantra*), the diagrams (*yantra*), the sacred stones (*salagrama*) and the devotional songs (*stotras*) are the different objects of worship. The *agamas*, the *Silpasastras*, the *puranas* and numerous literary forms provide these objects. Here an attempt is being made to deal with the objects of worship related to the deity Narasimha.

Narasimha's iconography varies at large incorporating all the aspects of the legend viz. emerging from pillar; rushing upon the demon; fighting with the demon; tear opening the abdomen of the demon, pulling out the entrails; holding the demon prostrate on his lap and offering protection to Prahlada. He is shown in three conventional postures: Seated (आसीन); standing □ (स्थानक) and striding (यानक). He is shown as ferocious (for wicked) and also benevolent (for devotees). He is alone (kevala) or with his consort or sometimes consorts or with Prahlada or with both.

The *Vihagendrasamhita* enumerates seventy four forms of Narasimha and states the differentiation is based on the weapons that the Lord hold in his hands.<sup>5</sup> but most of the varieties appear to be just names with some adjectives like *Svayamnarasimha*, *Vijayanarasimha* etc. Most of the varieties are with just appears to be epithets and descriptions can not be found.

<sup>5</sup> नरसिंह विशेषो स्ति चतुस्रसति वियहः । Viha.S. IV. 7a & इत्येवं नरसिंहं स्यादायुधानां विभ्रेधकम् । ibid. IV. 17a (cf. Danial Smith, H, *Vaishnava Iconography*, p.144 )

## Iconography:

The iconographical descriptions of the images of Narasimha are found in many *Vaikhanasa* and *Pancaratra*gama texts, in a few *puranas* and some other texts like the *Shilparatna*. The following texts contain the iconographical features of Narasimha and the kinds of different forms of Narasimha.

- 1) *The Vaikhanasagamas,*
- 2) *The Hayasirshasamhita,*
- 3) *The Sattvatasamhita,*
- 4) *The Vishvakshenasamhita,*
- 5) *The Vishnutantra,*
- 6) *The Padmasamhita,*
- 7) *The Markandeyasamhita,*
- 8) *The Isvarasamhita,*
- 9) *The Parasarasamhita,*
- 10) *The Seshasamhita,*
- 11) *The Paramesvarasamhita,*
- 12) *The Vihagendrasamhita,*
- 13) *The Agnipurana,*
- 14) *The Vishnudharmottarapurana and*
- 15) *The Matsyapurana.*

### 1) The *Vaikhanasagamas*:

The *Vaikhanasagama*<sup>6</sup> classifies Narasimha images into two types: 'Girija' and 'Stauna'. He is called 'Girija Narasimha', since he manifested from Giri (mountain) to kill Hiranyakasipu, whereas the *stauna* is called so as he emerged from pillar.

*Vaikhanasiya Kasyapa jnana kanda , Kasyapa Samhita, 8<sup>th</sup> chapter p.130*

**(a) The Girija Narasimha:**

The Girija Narasimha possesses the leonine face up to neck with manes and claws and ferociously opened mouth. The lower part is like that of human body. He possesses four hands with the conch and the disc in upper two hands and the lower right in *abhaya* posture, while the other placed on thigh. He is as white as the conch and white lilies in colour. He sits in *sukhasana* with all ornaments like crown etc. and with or without his consorts. His head is covered under seven or five hooded Adishesa from behind serving as a canopy (अनंतस्य सप्तभिः पञ्चभिर्वा फणैःछादितमौलिं). Below his seat the images of Brahma and Siva are to be made standing on to right and left respectively with folded hands. Brahma carrying the rosary garlands in two upper hands and remaining two lower hands saluting Narasimha, or one in *abhaya* posture and the other touching his waist. Similarly on the left side, Siva too holding a rosary in one hand and the axe in other hand and saluting with two lower hands or one in *abhaya* mode and the other touching the waist has to be made. Siva is to be shown crowned with matted hair. Such Girija Narasimha shall be worshipped for victory over enemies or to prevent other calamities. This image of Narasimha may be included among *privaradevatas* occupying the *vimana* of *sanctum sanctorum*.

**(b)The Stauna Narasimha:**

The Stauna Narasimha<sup>7</sup> is the one who emerged from pillar to protect his devotee as well as to kill Hiranyakasipu, who was oppressing the noble. The Stauna Narasimha has to be made to seat on the throne without pedestal and with very sharp nails and claws and possessed four lengthy arms with or without the conch and the disc in upper two hands. The lower right hand is to be in protection mode and the left

rested on thigh. Face and other features are like in Girija Narasimha. He is fearful and red in colour. Either side of him on the walls attendants holding the cowries and Hanuman and Garuda are to be placed. Below the throne Brahma and Siva saluting the lord and requesting him to pacify are to be placed (कोपमुपसंहरति देवेशमुद्विष्य वन्दमानौ ब्रह्मेश्वरौ च). Sri Lakshmi on the right side with folded hands and on the left Prahlada with folded hands and even other attendants or the lords of directions can also be shown. Who wish to get ride of diseases, fear and destructions and wish for victory, fame, longevity are to worship this Stauna Narasimha.

Apart from these, some texts of the *Vaikhanasagama* furnishes some more details. For instance, the Girija Narasimha may be made with:

- 1) Possessing the conch and the disc in upper two hands and lower right in protection mode only with four hands. While lower left on thigh there here it can be on thigh or on hip (कट्यवलंबितमूरस्थं वा).
- 2) He is adorned with all ornaments and a tapering and splendid crown (सर्वाभरणभूषितं करण्डिकामकुटयुतं).
- 3) His body shines in white in colour like moon and jasmine flower and wears red clothes (रक्तवस्त्रधरं).
- 4) He sits on a *simhasana* with the right leg hanging down and the left leg tucked up and rested on the seat (पादं दक्षिणं प्रसार्य वाममाङ्कुच्यसमासीनं).
- 5) Right to him sits Sridevi with left leg bent and right hanging down and with a lotus in her left hand and left hand rested on the seat. She is golden in colour and bedecked with all kinds of ornaments.
- 6) Left to him sits Bhudevi with right leg bent and left leg hanging down carrying a blue lotus in her right hand and left hand rested on seat. She is blue in colour and bedecked with all ornaments.



- 7) Other wise He can sit on the seat with or without his consorts with the left leg hanging down and the right tucked up with two hands resting on his knees, while holding the conch and the disc with other two hands (देवीभ्यां सहितं रहितं वा कारयेत्).

T. A. Gopinatha Rao<sup>8</sup> broadly classifies the images of Narasimha into two kinds following the classification found in the Vaikhanasagama viz. benign and malignant. Kevala Narasimha (alone) is said to be benign, while the later is terrific. He sits on lotus seat with legs crossed in *utkatikasana* and the knees bound by cloth. He is bedecked with all ornaments with four hands carrying the conch and the disc in two hands, while the other two placed on knees. He treated both Girija and Kevala as one and the same.

The Stauna Narasimha is the form of terrific, who sits on *simhasana* with left leg tucked up and right leg hanging down with four hands, holding the conch and the disc with upper two hands and lower right in protection posture and lower left on thigh is same. His body colour, clothes and adorning with ornaments are same. He is very fearful with sharp angry glances and with heavy mane covering his shoulders. To pacify the anger of Narasimha, Sridevi and Bhudevi on right and Prahlada on left in saluting postures are to be made. Narada on right and the lords of all directions on the adjoin walls can also be drawn in saluting postures.

Gopinatha Rao presents another description of Stauna Narasimha from the Vaikhanasagama, where the entire terrific situation was depicted. He states - "The Stauna Narasimha variety is usually in the act of killing Hiranyakasipu and therefore in awe inspiring aspect. This form is frightening for the wicked (दुष्टनामतिभीषणं). His mouth is wide

open and the eyes are round, blood-shot and terrible (रक्तवृत्तोग्रहष्टिकं). Narasimha in this form has many arms eight or sixteen. The demon is shown prostrate on the left thigh of the God, while the lord is holding the demon with two hands, other two hands tearing open the belly of the demon and yet another two hands pulling out the intestines of the demon and holding them as a garland round his neck."<sup>9</sup>

The *Bhrgusamhita* of *Vaikhanasagama* prescribes five forms of the images of Narasimha viz Girija, Stauna, Sudarshana, Lakshmi and Patala,<sup>10</sup> where the last three are added to the existing list.

### (c) Sudarshana Narasimha:

The image of Narasimha is to be made seated in *sukhasana* posture in the midst of radiant and lustrous disc (सुदर्शन चक्र) glowing thousands of Suns put together. The lord is very fearful and at the same time bestowal of protection to his devotees. He carries only disc in all his hands. Below his seat Brahma and Siva are to be placed standing to pacify the lord.<sup>11</sup>

### (d) Lakshmi Narasimha:

The Lord in this form sits in the *sukhasana* with right leg tucked up and rested on seat, while the left is hanging down. Lakshmi bedecked with all ornaments sits on the right thigh of the lord with pleasant composition with her legs hanging down. Her body complexion is crystal white similar to that of pollen of lotus. Her two hands are in *anjali* (folded hands) posture or one hand in protection mode and second holding lotus. The lord holds the conch and disc in upper hands and with lower right hand raps around the waist of Lakshmi from behind

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 198

<sup>10</sup> Vaikhanasiyabhagavadcchastra, Bhrgusamhita, Kriyadhikara 11<sup>th</sup> chapter 27a-29b

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.11. 29b-33

and carry lotus in other hand. The text recommends this posture for those who wish for everlasting devotion and salvation. It further states that who wish for immortal benefits (केवलमामुष्मिकापेक्षी) have to make the goddess to sit on the left thigh of the lord, while the lord's left leg is tucked up and rest on seat and the right leg hanging down. He embraces the goddess with left hand from behind, while the right hand in protection mode. Remaining two hands hold the conch and the disc as usual.

**(e) Patala Narasimha:**

This type is similar to Lakshmi Narasimha, but only difference is that the Lord is covered over his head with the five hooded Adishesha as a canopy with right hand in the protection mode and left hand placed on his hip.

**(f) Puccha Narasimha:**

*Prakirnadhikara* of *Bhrgusamhita*<sup>12</sup> states Narasimha has to be worshipped for victory and prosperity. It speaks of a new kind of image of Narasimha i.e. *Puccha* Narasimha. In this variety, the lord possesses a tail, with right hand in protection mode and left is placed on his thigh.<sup>13</sup> *Isvarasamhita* explains this variety little more elaborately. It describes *Puccha* Narasimha with two hands (द्विभुजं) and a prominent tail (लांगूलमाच्छयुक्तं) and red in colour like red hibiscus flower (जपाकुसुमप्रतीकाशं) with blood-shot eyes (रक्तलोचनं). He presses both his hands against the ground and is shown as heavily striking the ground with his tail (आस्फोट्य

<sup>12</sup> *Vaikhāṇasiyabhaḡavadēcāstra, Bhrgusamhita, prakirnadhikara.* 13.44-72

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 13. 68a-69a

भूमौ). He is terrible in this aspect and appears as if devour all the animate and inanimate with lolling around tongue.<sup>14</sup>

## 2) The *Hayasirshasamhita*:

The *Hayasirshasamhita* contains Narasimha image at two places<sup>15</sup> and furnishes slight variations as mentioned below.

- 1) His face is widened and has round eyes. Mouth is ferociously wide opened with sharp white fangs.
- 2) His eyebrows are closely knitted and twisted with fury and tongue is lolling around.
- 3) He is bedecked with all ornaments and wearing vajrayanti garland and having srivatsa mark on his body (भूषितं वैजयन्त्या तु मालया श्रीसमन्वितम्)
- 4) He possesses thin mane hanging over on his shoulders.

## 3) The *Sattvatasamhita*:<sup>16</sup>

The *sattvatasamhita* adds few more details as fallows.

- 1) He is surrounded by the sparks of flaming fire that is emanating from his body and with gigantic figure and appears so ferocious.<sup>17</sup>
- 2) He has one head and four arms carrying the conch and the disc in upper two hands and lower right hand is a protection mode while the lower left hand placed on his hip. He wears yellow robes.
- 3) His body colour is pure gold (निष्ठस कनकाभं) and his form incorporates pure knowledge. (शुद्धज्ञानानुविद्धं).

<sup>14</sup> Isvara Samhita. IV. 73b-75a (cf. H. Danielsmith, Vaishnava Iconography . p.142)

<sup>15</sup> H. S. XXIII.15-21 and 326 (cf H.Daniel Smith, Vaishnava iconography, p.139)

<sup>16</sup> S. S XII.73-18 (cf H.Daniel Smith, Vaishnava iconography, pp.139-140)

<sup>17</sup> ज्वलदग्नि स्फुलिंगाभिः स्वदेहोत्थाभिरावृतम् SS XII.74

#### 4) The *Vishvakshenasamhita*:<sup>18</sup>

According to the *Vishvakshenasamhita*-

- 1) His ferocious three eyes glow like that of the brilliance of the fire and the sun put together. (बिभर्ति नेत्राणि हुताशनार्कं प्रभञ्चितान्येव विभीषणानि)
- 2) His adorned with all the ornaments and carry the disc in the right hand the conch in the left hand and remaining two hands rest on his knees.
- 3) The body is a mass of crystal white like a big mountain (श्वेतपर्वतसङ्काशं).
- 4) His fangs are pure white like the crescent moon of autumn season. The broad face is ferocious and fearful for the wicked.
- 5) His sound of the roar is terrible like the sounds of the lightning coming out of the dark clouds (however this character can not be depicted).

#### 5) The *Vishnutantra*:<sup>19</sup>

- 1) His body complexion is compared with that of a big white mountain and is smeared with red sandal paste.
- 2) His leg is like the thick black cloud and he is dreadful to the demons.
- 3) He is capable of clearing of all the miseries and bestows success to the people.

#### (g) Yoga Narasimha:

The *Vishnutantra* clearly speaks of the image of Yoga Narasimha with distinctive features. He is to be made with yogapatta viz., with

<sup>18</sup> *Vishvakshenasamhita* XI.58-63(cf H.Daniel smith, *Vaishnava iconography* p.140)

<sup>19</sup> *Vishnutantra* XVII.3-5a and 7b-8(cf. ibid )

crossed and uplifted legs held firm by a bond and resting the elbows on both the knees.<sup>20</sup> He is to be made with Sridevi and Bhoodevi and also with Brahma and Sankara. (श्रीभूमीभ्यां समोपेतं ब्रह्मशङ्करसंयुतम्)

Gopinatha Rao T.A points out the images of this variety, where he sits in an easy posture viz., with the left leg tucked up resting on the seat and the right leg hanging down touching the ground. Lakshmi seated on his left lap and Adishesha with his hoods spread out and covers the head of Narasimha as a canopy.<sup>21</sup>

#### 6) The *Padmasamhita*:<sup>22</sup> and 7) The *Markandeyasamhita*:

The *Padmasamhita* and the *Markandeyasamhita* state some peculiar characteristics that belong to different sectarian features. A few of them are mentioned here for instance:

- 1) He has a crown on the head and possesses three eyes (त्रिनेत्रं) with curved eyebrows.
- 2) He shines with Srivatsa sign on the chest and wears a red coloured bodice (रक्तकञ्चुकसंयुक्त), whereas in all the other samhitas he wears red coloured garment only.
- 3) He squats on the seat carrying the conch and the disc in two hands and the other two rests on the knees. (yoga posture)
- 4) His nails resemble like Vajrayudha.
- 5) He can be shown as seated or standing. When standing he carries the conch, the disc and the mace. ( शङ्खचक्रगदापाणि)
- 6) He sits on a seat hanging down the right leg on the ground and the left leg tucked up and rested on the seat along with Sridevi and Bhoodevi. His right hand is in protection mode.

<sup>20</sup> योगपट्टसमायुक्तमसीनं सम्यगास्ने V.T XVII.7b

<sup>21</sup> Gopinath rao T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* p.198

<sup>22</sup> *Padmasamhita* XVII .22-41(cf H.Daniel Smith, *Vaishnava iconography* pp.140-141)

7) He may be made with eight or sixteen hands:

- (a) When he is eight armed, he carries the disc; the sword and the arrow in right hands and the conch; the mace and the saranga in left hands. The remaining right hand in protection mode while the left is rested on the knee or both the hands can also be stretched on the knees.<sup>23</sup>
- (b) When he has sixteen arms, he carries the disc; the sword; the axe; the trident; the bow and arrow; the spear; and the vajra in right hands and the conch; the shield; the mace; the sakthi; the saranga; the noose; and the goad in left hands the remaining two hands rest on the knees.
- (c) Another variety of sixteen arms of Narasimha carries the same weapons the hands but make the demon king prostate on his lap and actually tearing open the belly of the demon with the blood drenched with the remaining two hands.<sup>24</sup> Siva has to be shown on the right side and Prahlada and Garuda on the other side.

8) *The Isvarasamhita*:<sup>25</sup>

The *Isvarasamhita* describes the following features:

- 1) Narasimha with leonine widened face and long fangs, thick mane and the body shining with the ornaments especially with *Srivatsa* and *Kaustubha*. He has eight arms. He has red coloured hair and reddened eyes. (रक्तकेशं च रक्ताक्षं)
- 2) He shines like the luster equal to thousands of moons and his colour is crystal white like snow, jasmine and the moon. His radius is equal to thousands of Suns, he has a tall and splendid

<sup>23</sup> यद्वा भुजयुगं जानुद्वयस्योपरि कल्पयेत् P. S. XVII.33b

<sup>24</sup> उत्सङ्गे देवदेवस्य हिरण्यकशिपुं रिपुम् नखैर्विदारितोरस्कं सवदुधिरपङ्किलम् P. S. XVII 37

<sup>25</sup> *Isvarasamhita* XI.2b-4a;62b.66and76b-81 and 4.73b-75a(cf H.Daniel Smith, *Vaishnava iconography* pp142-143)

towering crown. His face is encircled with shining mane and nails glow red. (रक्तनखोज्ज्वलां)

- 3) He sits in *yogapatta* posture on the lotus seat with the normal hands holding the conch and disc and the other two resting on the knees. He wears a sacred card and an upper garment. He is bedecked with all the ornaments along with *Shrivatsa* and *Kaustubha*. This form symbolizes the omniscience (सर्वज्ञानमयं), while it is usual for yoganarasimha to be alone, sometimes Lakshmi is also shown seated on his left knee.
- 4) He is very ferocious and frightening. He shines like fire at deluge with five heads and adorned with andamala. There is serpent dangling down from his left shoulder forming the sacrificial card (सर्पयज्ञोपवीतं). The heads facing each of the four directions and the fifth one is on the top of the head shining like a blazing fire (ऊर्ध्वमग्निनिभं मुखं). The faces facing east, west, south and north (पूर्वादिचोत्तरान्तं) shine like moon (white), collyrium (black), gold (yellow) and red coloured insect (Indragopa) respectively (चन्द्राञ्जन सुवर्णाभं इन्द्रगोपनिभं तथा). He carry in his strong hands the rosary, the mace, the lotus, the conch, the bow, the ploughshare, the disc, the arrow, the gesture of boon bestowal and the sword. This form is called meru and capable of curing all elements.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Isvarasamhita IV. 76a-81



## 9) The Parasarasamhita:<sup>27</sup>

According to the Parasarasamhita:

- 1) He is in the midst of milky ocean and represent reality consciousness and eternal bliss (सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूपं). He is bedecked with numerous ornaments and his face is exceedingly pleasant (अतिप्रसन्नं). He is with lakshmi (but sometimes with Bhoodevi also). He is brilliantly shining like the sun and white coloured like moon. His head is covered by the hoods of Adishesha as canopy. He has three eyes (त्र्यक्षं). He holds the disc, the trident and one hand in the protection mode.
- 2) He is in standing posture (प्रत्यालीढं) having three eyes, fierceful fangs and tawny red hair (त्रिनयनलसित पिङ्गकेशं). He holds the weapons; the sakti, the sword; the fire; the goad; the cudgel; the lance; the axe; the disc; the bow; the arrow; the noose; the ploughshare; the vajra; the mace; the pestle and the trident and he is sixteen armed<sup>28</sup>

## 10) The Seshasamhita:

### (h) Varaha Narasimha:

The *Seshasamhita* mentions<sup>29</sup> the image of Varaha Narasimha with a peculiar characteristic of having three eyes, which is usually associated to Siva. He is ferocious and possessing eight hands carrying discs in all of them. Though he is mentioned as ugramurti, he is also considered as compassionate towards his devotees. However no detailed iconographical features are enumerated in the Samhita. The

<sup>27</sup> Parasarasamhita XV.160 and XXV.10(cf H.Daniel smith, Vaishnava Iconography, pp 142-143

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. XV.160

<sup>29</sup> Sesa Samhita XXIII. 19 (cf. H. Danial Smith, Vaishnava Iconography. P.142 )

presiding deity of Simhacalam, A. P. is Sri Varaha Narasimha, but the features described above does not suit to it. The image of Varaha Narasimha is having a head of a boar with two hands in standing position.

The *Seshasamhita* also refers Sudarshana Narasimha.<sup>30</sup> It is seen on the reverse side of Narasimhayantra, the representation of Sudarshana (the personified disc) with eight or sixteen hands standing or moving, which symbolizes the *Visvarupa* concept of Vishnu. It simply states that the Sudarshana Narasimha is universal with an appealing body (विश्वरूपमुदारङ्ग) and possessing series of burning flames around (ज्वालमालाधरं).

At another place it is said that the image may be adorned with all ornaments and made seated along with Sridevi, Bhudevi and Neladevi in the benevolent posture. It is also stated that he may be bedecked with all ornaments, holding all kinds of weapons.<sup>31</sup> In all these places the Narasimha form must be in benevolent form when he is either with his consorts or Prahlada.

### 11) The *Paramesvarasamhita*<sup>32</sup>

Generally when the lord is described with sixteen arms, he is in the act of tearing open the abdomen of the demon Hiranyakasipu. But here in this *Paramesvarasamhita* and *Parasarasamhita* XXV.10 such act is not found. The *Parasarasamhita* even describes the lord the standing posture (प्रत्यालीढं).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid XXIV. 15-16 (cf. ibid. p.143 )

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. LXII. 12-13 ( cf. ibid . p, 143 )

<sup>32</sup> *Paramesvara samhita* XXIII.46-50

Here also he is sixteen armed and the weapons are also like parasara samhita XXV.10. In edition it is stated here that he can have eight arms and in that case he holds the lotus, the goad, the pestle, the disc, the conch, the bow with arrow, the noose, and the mace.

#### **12) The *Vihagendrasamhita*:**

The Vihagendrasamhita enumerates seventy four kinds of Narasimha images, but the features are not elaborated.

#### **13) The *Agnipurana*:<sup>33</sup>**

Narasimha has wide opened mouth and has two hands each holding the shining disc and the mace in the act of tearing open the belly of the demon Hiranyakasipu.

#### **14) The *Visnudharmottarapurana*:<sup>34</sup>**

This purana states that Narasimha manifested from samkarsana form of Vishnu (हरिः संकर्षणांशेन नरसिंहवपुः धरः). It states that the demon represents by thick mane resembling the fire (ज्वालामालाकुलमुखोज्वालाकेशरमण्डलः).

#### **15) The *Matsyapurana*:<sup>35</sup>**

It states Narasimha has eight hands; ferocious; ignorance and Narasimha dispelled such ignorance in all the worlds arising out of mind, speech and body (सर्वाज्ञाननाशिणी). He is surrounded widened lion's face and large eyes. He has thick and erected mane; attractive ears and the act of tearing open the abdomen of the demon with the entrails

<sup>33</sup> The Agnipurana 49.11

<sup>34</sup> V.D.P. III. 78 Ch.

<sup>35</sup> M.P. 259.31-35

coming out; the demon with vomiting blood and synchronizing eyes and face. Sometimes he may be depicted as fighting with demon and holding sword and shield.

### **The *Silparatna*:**<sup>36</sup>

It describes Narasimha with eight arms. The demon is to be depicted as vomiting blood and his entrails coming out. The demon holds sword and shield in his two hands. He holds the entrails of the demon dugout from his body as garland round his neck with topmost two hands and the lower two are engaged in tearing open, while other four hold the disc, the lotus, the mace and the conch.

### **The *Mayamata*:**<sup>37</sup>

Mayamata describes Narasimha with very sharp fangs and nails; white in colour; strong tongue and adorned with all the ornaments wearing red garments. He, with eight or ten arms the actual act of killing the demon has to be depicted. Such icons should be installed on the mountains or in the caves or in the forests. If installed in midst of enemies(battle field),the destruction of the enemies is certain. The specific point mentioned here is that while killing the demon, Narasimha should not have any weapons in the hands but both hands are to be engaged in killing the demon (हस्तौ युद्धे निरायुधौ ..... विदारणकरद्वयः).While installing Narasimha in the towns or villages, he has to be shown with four arms holding conch and the disc in two hands while another one hand offering protection mode and another rested on the seat. He is adorned with all the ornaments and wearing yellow garments. He can be in standing or sitting or in yoga posture with knees raised up and bound with a cloth.

The *Silparatna* 25<sup>th</sup> patala(cf Gopinathrao T.A, elements of Hindu iconography P.202)

<sup>37</sup> *Mayamata* 36.15-24

## Iconometry:

The Agamas provide even iconometric details for preparing the icons of Narasimha. Several talamana systems are available in the agamic texts for the same. The following agama texts contain the iconometric descriptions of Narasimha images:

- 1) Satvatasamhita:24.180-227
- 2) Isvarasamhita: 17.181-227
- 3) Sri prasnasamhita:13.96-142
- 4) The Matsya purana:257<sup>th</sup> chapter and
- 5) Vimanarohanakalpa, 57<sup>th</sup> patala

The Matsyapurana<sup>38</sup> enumerates the harm to be caused by preparing defective images. Different bad effects are stated for different defects of bodily limbs.

The Kapinjalasamhita<sup>39</sup> treats Visvarupa, Narasimha, Vatasayi and Parasurama as ugramutris and prohibits the consecration of such in the townships and facing townships. It recommends installing such murtis in the temples facing the mountains or on the banks of rivers, facing them. It also states that such ugrmurtis can be installed as per ones choice, when installed on the top of the hills or in the forests.

## Tantric Aspect

Inspite of the advancement of the scientific investigation, it appears that everyone is slowly finding that behind all the material phenomena, there are subtle spiritual forces. This spiritual force has its own laws. The saints are religious investigators of this field develop the knowledge to apply its subtle laws to create spiritual evaluation of the man. This kind of practical application of laws forms the science of

<sup>38</sup>

MP 57.15-21  
Sri Kapinjalasamhita, Ed. By. P. Sitaramacharyulu, Bhadrachalam. 9.37a-41a

tantra. The main purpose of this science is to invoke the god through mantras and yantras. It is viewed that tantric practices are traceable to the period of the Harappa and Mohanzodaro civilization. There is mention of tantric practices in the Ramayana and in the santiparva of the Mahabharata, when Bhisma enumerated many branches of knowledge to Dharmaraja.<sup>40</sup>

The word tantra is often misunderstood because of prevalence of a mode of practice called Vama marga in which sex, meat, fish, wine etc., have a place. Besides this, there are some black magics which bring disharmony to the others are also included in this heading tantra. Such are degrading practices and are said that they ruin the practitioners. This can be compared to the use of present powerful atomic energy for destructive purposes. Just like atomic energy is not responsible for the degrading/destruction, so also tantra practices.

The word tantra is derived from 'तन्' -to spread and 'त्रान्' -to move. Hence the general definition of tantra may be said as "It spreads matters including the tatvas and mantras and offer protection".<sup>41</sup>The tantras mainly deal with mantra, yantra and worship of a deity by which one can invoke the deity by his spiritual perfectness.

### **Mantra:**

The word '*Mantra*' is derived from 'मन्' to think and 'त्रान्' to protect. So *mantra* protects one from dangers. *Mantra* can even be a single letter can extend to many letters. The *Pranava* (ॐ), which is considered as the first and foremost *mantra* can be divided into two kinds i.e. '*sabdatmaka*' and '*dvanyatmaka*'. It is consisting of three letters 'अ', 'उ', and 'मू' and can be recited by any person and is known

<sup>40</sup> Temple India, Vivekanandakendra patrika, feb'81.p.32

<sup>41</sup> Kane,HDS vol II part II pp 1048-1049

as 'sabdātma' like any other letters. The second 'dvanyātma' is spiritual and only worshippers (*sadhakas*), who contemplate on that 'ॐ' can realise the meaning of *pranava* by their spiritual power which leads them the abode of Vishnu (तद् विष्णोः परमपदं). The tantric texts enumerate several *mantras* relating to several deities, which are capable of invoking them. The sounds produced are called aksharas and when they are written, they are called *varnas*. The *mantras* are evolved from the *varnas* and those are supposed to be living conscious sound powers. The *mantras* are mere letters. They assume different forms such as *Bija*, *Sakti*, *Kavaca*, *Hrdya*, *Netra* and *Astra*. They are not language and do not convey any meaning. They are the *devatas* imparted to the worshipper by a qualified teacher (Guru) at the time of initiation.

All *mantras* are endowed with super-natural power of the God. The worshipper has to awaken the power with full concentration. The essentials of worshipper are the God, the *Mantra* and the Guru. He has to treat that the three are as inseparable for achieving the desired object and has to contemplate and realise.<sup>42</sup> All the texts prohibit the worshipper of any *mantra* to practice it on his own. The *Nyasa* that one comes across in the *sadhana* method of *mantra*, means mentally invoking the deity and the *mantra* to occupy certain places of the body of the worshipper to make it pure for meditation. The perfection of the *mantra* depends on *Purascarana*<sup>43</sup>.

*Gayatri mantra* is the single most repeated *mantra* from Vedic period. It reads thus:

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<sup>42</sup> Kane, P.V, H D S VOL. V . Part II p.1099

<sup>43</sup> *Purascarana* mainly consists of *dyana*, *japa* of *mantra* and *tarpana*.

“ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्”

“om! Let us contemplate on the wondrous spirit of the divine creator (*savitr*) of the earthly, atmospheric and celestial spheres. May He protect us.”

After the primitive Vedic period, when the worship of Vishnu and Siva grew, there arose *gayatri mantras* for all the varied forms. Thus it was that a *Narasimha gayatri* was evolved and found in *Taittiriya Aranyaka* as traversed already. It runs thus:

ॐ “वज्रनखाय विद्महे तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्राय धीमहि तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात्”

“ Let us meditate on Lord Narasimha, who is endowed with sharp teeth and nails as strong as a Thunderbolt. May He protect us.”

*Narasimha mantras* with different number of letters evolved. The *Padmasamhita* states that there are sixty four *mantras* of Narasimha, but categorically stating dealt with few *mantras* only.<sup>44</sup> Among the *mantras*, *Narasimha anustubhmantra* is considered as *Mantraraja*. Besides *Narasimha poorva tapaniyopanishad*, almost all the *Vaishnavagama* texts explain this *mantra*, which runs like this:

“उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।

नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥”

This means ‘I salute Narasimha, who is terrible, mighty, blazing in all directions, fearful as well as compassionate and death to death himself.’ It is just *sabdatmaka* meaning as said already. The said *Upanishad* mentions that the recitation of this *mantra* is to be followed by the four ‘*angamantras*’ (ancillary *mantras*) viz. *Pranava*, *Yajurtakshmi*, *Gayatri*, and *Narasimha Gayatri*. The said *Upanishad*, *Ahimbudhnyasamhita*,

<sup>44</sup> चतुष्पदि प्रभेदस्य मन्त्रस्य नृहरेः । P.S. , carya pada 27.30.



Parasara Samhita etc a;; tantric texts discussed this mantra elaborately with its bija , sakti, kavaca, hrdaya etc subsidiaries and declared that this is the powerful of all. The bijakshara for this Narasimha mantra is 'क्षूं' (*kshroum*) and it itself is a single letter mantra.

The modern tantric texts like *Saradatilakam*, *Prapancasarasarasangraha* delineated the mantras explained in *agamas* and handed over to the society, The *Saradatilakam*,<sup>45</sup> mentions the following mantras pertaining to Narasimha:

- 1) Narasimha Mantra with 32 letters (*matraraja* )
- 2) Jvala Narasimha
- 3) Lakshmi Narasimha
- 4) Sudarshana Narasimha and
- 5) Cakra .

In addition, *Prapancasarasarasangraha*<sup>46</sup> mentioned some more types. They are:

- 1) Narasimha mantra with 6 letters,
- 2) Narasimha mantra with 10 letters,
- 3) Lakshminarasimha mantra with 6 letters,
- 4) Lakshminarasimha mantra with 18 letters and
- 5) Aghoranarasimha mantra

The *Padmasamhita* stated one more namely '*Darodara Narasimha mantra*'. Many agamic texts elaborately discussed these mantras along with their ancillaries.

<sup>45</sup> Lakshmana desikendra, *saradatilakam*, XVI ch.

<sup>46</sup> Girvanendra saraswati, *Prapancasarasarasangra*, 23 and 24 chs

## Yantra:

Along side mantras, yantra is also evolved by the tantric sastra. Yantra is a diagram engraved, drawn or painted on a metal, stone, paper, or other material. This yantra, in its loose sense is some times called 'cakra' also. This is a developed product of mantra. It is believed that the deity worshipped on yantra yields immediate effect. The yantra is of two kinds' viz. *Nitya yantra* and *Bhavayantra*. In nitya yantra, by nature itself, the deity exists for ever in salagrama sila, narmadesvara sila, lotus are few among Nityayantra.

The second is Bhavayantra. The qualified preceptors scribe certain diagrams and mantras on a plate and consecrate divine power of certain deity on that. These yantras are said to have power to remove hindrances of the people.<sup>47</sup>

Sri Paramesvarasamhita discusses about Sudarshana Narasimha yantra in detail as to how to this yantra, where and how to consecrate and as to how to worship in three chapters.<sup>48</sup> It is sated that this yantra was first narrated to Siva by Vishnu himself to see that Siva get rid of his sin of cutting down the head of Brahma by worshipping this yantra.<sup>49</sup> It is also stated that Indra and other gods got this mantra from Siva and by worshipping ruled over their respective regions effectively. The kings, who worship this mantra do not face instability of their sovereignty, it is said.

Narasimhashatcakropanishat mentions six types of *Narasimhacakras* viz. *aacakra*, *sucakra*, *mahacakra*, *sakalalokarakshanacakra*, *dyutacakra* and *surantakacakra* explains

<sup>47</sup> Hindu Samskruti Anka, Kalyan, p.463

<sup>48</sup> Sri Paramesvara Samhita Ed. By Sri Govindascarya , chs. 23-25

<sup>49</sup> स्माराध्यः चिरेनैव पूतभावोऽऽ भवद्भवः

their formation.<sup>50</sup>There are four more yantras of Narasimha mentioned in Saradatilakam like tantric texts. They are:

- 1) *Narasimha Yantram,*
- 2) *Ripudvamsa Yantram,*
- 3) *Apannivaraka Yantram and*
- 4) *Cakra Yantram.*

### **Salagrama:**

Salagramas, which are often called also as Saligramas, are found in the sacred river Gandaki in Nepal, where Vishnu known by name Saligraman. These salagramas are believed to be the direct representative of Vishnu and it is said that even no need for separate consecration as in the case of icons or yantras. Salagramas are available for all Vishnu forms and they vary from each other based on the marks on them like whorls, spirals visible through a hole on the surface of the stone. The emblems of Vishnu, the conch and the disc are visible on these salagramas. An expertise is required to distinguish and to identify the variety of these salagramas based on the characteristics mentioned above. These salagramas are worshipped individually or in a group of salagramas, but it requires strict regimen, while worshipping. It is said that Narasimha salagrama is tawny red in colour and in the inside of which is seen a broad chest like cavity with three or five dots generally.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Narasimhashatcakropanishat, 108 upanishats . pp.401-404

<sup>51</sup> Dr. M. S. Rajajee, *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, p. 26

Sri Purushottamasamhita describes different varieties of Narasimha salagramas thus:<sup>52</sup>

- 1) *Lakshmi Narasimha*: Black in colour with a dot and the mark of a cakra on left is called Lakshmi Narasimha salagrama. This is said to be cable of bestowing prosperity and salvation.
- 2) *Vira Lakshmi Narasimha*: Tawny red in colour and shining like gold with big cavity (mouth) and with marks of two cakras is called Vira Lakshmi Narasimha salagrama. This is fit for worship by bachelors only.
- 3) *Vidarana Narasimha*: Tawny red in colour and a dot and marks of sakti at a corner : a dot and a hoof mark and wide opened mouth with the marks of mane, cakra and fangs are called Vidarana Narasimha. It is also worthy to be worshipped by bachelors.
- 4) *Jvala Vidarana Narasimha*: A cakra mark and mark of fangs inside is called Jvalavidarana Narasimha. It is stated that it destruct the worshiper if other than bachelor.
- 5) *Narasimha*: Tawny red in colour with widened cavity and three dots; fearful with fangs and wide opened mouth is called Narasimha salagrama. It can also be with the marks of four heads in the cavity and a cakra along with a mark of fish or the fangs besides cakra is also Narasimha salagrama. It is worthy to be worshipped by the ascetics only.
- 6) *Kapila Narasimha*: Two big cakra marks in middle with red coloured bead mark and another mark of cakra is just visible than it is called Kapila Narasimha. It is worthy to worship for salvation or victory.
- 7) *Sarvatomukha Narasimha*: Seven cakras with many cavities and golden streaks and besmeared mouth with cakra mark on left and also round in shape with tawny red colour is called

- Sarvatomukha Narasimha. It is capable of bestowing salvation.
- 8) *Bhitakhya Narasimha and Patala Narasimha*: Ten cakras with big cavity with multiple colours and openings is either called Bhitakhya Narasimha or Patala Narasimha.
  - 9) *Kukshi Narasimha*: Small and minute cakras and with less wait with very big cavity is called Kukshi Narasimha. It is worthy to be worshipped by hermits.
  - 10) *Rakshasa Narasimha*: Two cakras with multiple cuttings and cavities and dark gold in colour is called Rakshasa Narasimha. It is stated he destroys the houses if kept in the houses.
  - 11) *Vidutjihva Narasimha*: The shining mouth with two cakras and an elevated head is called Vidyutjihva Narasimha. It deserves to be worshipped by the poor and said as capable of bestowing wealth.
  - 12) *Adhomuka Narasimha*: Three cakras located on either side of the mouth and behind is called Adhomukha Narasimha. It is capable of bestowing salvation to the worshippers.
  - 13) *Bala Narasimha*: Two cakras with a small hole and decorated with the mark of vanamala is called Bala Narasimha. It is said that it can clear off all the worldly attachments.
  - 14) *Vibhishana Narasimha*: Widened cakra with widened shape and very big mouth is called Vibhishana Narasimha. It gives miseries if worshipped, it is stated.
  - 15) *Astabhuja Narasimha*: Four cakras or eight cakras with elongated mouth and elevated shape is called Astabhuja Narasimha. It is worthy to be worshipped by sages.

In this connection Sri S.K.Ramachandra Rao in his work Salagramakosa mentions twenty four varieties of Narasimha salagramas.<sup>53</sup>They are:

- 1-3) *Lakshmi Narasimha*(three varieties)
- 4) *Yogananda Narasimha*
- 5) *Bala Narasimha*
- 6) *Vidyutjihva Narasimha*
- 7) *Vibhisana Narasimha*
- 8) *Adhomukha Narasimha*
- 9) *Patala Narasimha*
- 10) *Sarvatomukha Narasimha*
- 11) *Raksasa Narasimha*
- 12) *Vidarana Narasimha*
- 13) *Kuksi Narasimha*
- 14) *Bhitti Narasimha*
- 15) *Vijaya Narasimha*
- 16) *Kapila Narasimha*
- 17-19) *Jvala Narasimha*(three varieties)
- 20) *Mahajvala Narasimha*
- 21) *Sudha Narasimha*
- 22) *Buddha cakra Narasimha*
- 23) *Damshtrakarala Narasimha and*
- 24) *Vakra damshtra Narasimha.*

In brief the *Narasimhasalagrama* is generally red in colour and denotes power. The *Laksminarasimhasalagrama* has a cakra on the left side on black in colour with dots is said to bestow worldly prosperity. Certain varieties of *Narasimha salagrama* as seen above are not suitable for worship by ordinary people. All agama texts prohibit the sale or purchase of *salagramas*.

<sup>53</sup> S.K.Ramachandra Rao, *Salagramakosa* (cf Dr.M.S.Rajaji, *Sri Narasimha Avatara* pp26-27)

## **Tirtha:**

All the Puranas glorify the teerthas are ponds which have an association with the god because of which they become supremely sacred. There is a direct reference of *Narasimhatirtha* in the *Skandapurana*, wherein Sanatkumara narrates to Vyasa that there is *Narasimhatirtha*, the best among all and can eliminate all the sins<sup>54</sup> It also speaks that it is located in *Avantidesa*.<sup>55</sup> The *Brahmapurana* says that there is no god equal to lord Narasimha and no *tirtha* is equal to *Narasimha tirtha*.<sup>56</sup>

## **Yajna / Homa / Vrata:**

The *Narasimhapurana*<sup>57</sup> gives procedure for performing Narasimha homa to get rid of all sorts of troubles. *Srimannarayasamhita*<sup>58</sup> describes yajna by name 'Grahabadhanivarakanarasimhesti' to get rid of the adverse influences of planets and evil spirits. The *Varahapurana*<sup>59</sup> explains *Narasimhadvadasi* vrata. Dharmasindhu<sup>60</sup> gives a *vrata* of lord Narasimha which is to be observed on *Narasimhajayanti* which falls on *Vaisaka sudda chaturdasi*. Another *vrata* of recent origin by name *Sri Narasimhavratalkalpa*<sup>61</sup> of T.V.Ramakrishnamurthy is also available.

Thus the *agamic* and *tantric* texts evolved different methods of Narasimha worship as discussed supra.

<sup>54</sup> भूयः शृणु व्यास तीर्थानामुत्तमं वरम् ००  
ततीर्थं सर्वपापघ्नं नृसिंहस्य महात्मनः०० || The Skandapurana, Avantikanda. 66.1

<sup>55</sup> एवं तीर्थं परं व्यास अयन्त्यां विषते भुवि Ibid 66.23a

<sup>56</sup> Dr.M.S.Rajaji *Sri Narasimhavatara* p 27

<sup>57</sup> The *Narasimhapurana* ch.35

<sup>58</sup> *Srimannarayanasmhita* ch.8

<sup>59</sup> The *Varahapurana* ch.42

<sup>60</sup> Kasinadhasastry, *Dharmasindhu* pp 73-74

<sup>61</sup> T.V.Ramakrishnamurthy, *Srinarasimha vratalkalpa*,hyd,2010

## Mudra:

Mudras are the hand postures or gestures of the fingers extensively used not only in daily life but also in poetry, drama, dance, agamas etc. In agama and tantric texts different mudras are enumerated for different deities and for different purposes.<sup>62</sup>The Mudrasnighantu<sup>63</sup>explains two types of Narasimha mudras (positioning of fingers in specific order) thus:

“Sitting on the ground by placing both the hands between the thighs and the chin and lips touching each other and than shaking the hands repeatedly and than bring the mouth in normal position the tongue extending forward like lelihana mudra is called Narasimhi mudra which is loved by Vishnu very much”.

“With the palms facing downwards, both the thumbs and little fingers be extended downwards is another Narasimha mudra.”

Sri Kapinjalasamhita<sup>64</sup> explains another Narasimhamudra:

“अङ्गुष्ठेन कनिष्ठान्तं नमयि त्वाङ्गुलित्रयम् ।

ऊर्ध्वं कृत्वा सममुखी नृसिंहं समुदाहृतम् ॥

So far the objects of worship related to the deity Narasimha as found in the different agamic texts in the form of images are dealt with. It also mentions the iconometry of the images of Narasimha found in the Shilpasastras. The other objects used in the process of the worship of Narasimha like mantra, yantra, salagrama, home , yagna and mudras are also dealt with.

<sup>62</sup> Prof K. S. Ramachandra Rao, *Pratimakosa* vol 5 pp 120-121

<sup>63</sup> Mudrasnighantu, Dictionary of tantrabhidana slokas 54-58

<sup>64</sup> Sri kapinjalasamhita, Ed. Prtd By P. Sitaramacharyulu, Bhradrachalam, ( no year)



CHAPTER III  
SOME IMPORTANT TEMPLES  
AND KSHETRAS DEDICATED  
TO NARASIMHA

### CHAPTER III

## SOME IMPORTANT TEMPLES AND KSHETRAS DEDICATED TO NARASIMHA

#### Importance of Temples and Kshetras:

Among the five fold forms of the Almighty, the last i.e., *arca* form is the only form easily accessible to its devotees. The first form '*para*' (transcendental) of the lord is out of reach to the mankind as he manifests in heaven in that form. The second '*vyuha*' (emanatory) is centered in the milky ocean. The third '*vibhava*' (incarnatory) form and the fourth '*antaryamin*' (Imment) forms certainly have intimate connection with the common man, but very difficult to get them like the underground water , which can be perceived only by Yogis (seers) as they have single minded devotion<sup>1</sup>. In '*arca*' form, the God resides in the idols and images. Consecrating and worshipping them is the only means to a common man, for he can invoke them at all times and in all places. With that idea, the temples were constructed in olden times. To create faith in the common mass, some mythological legends (*kshetramahatmyam*) were woven around those places. No doubt, the temples played a vital role in Hindu tradition and contributed to the enrichment of heritage. The temples are not only religious centers, but are the abodes of a number of fine arts like architecture, art and dance etc.

It is customary for a devotee, after worshipping a deity in a temple to choose a quiet place to meditate. He contemplates the mythological background of the temple and the people, who sanctified the temple in the past. He thinks of the glory of the lord. Thus his meditation comes to an end. This is very easy and practicable for the common man. The

<sup>1</sup> Satya Murti Ayyangar, *The origin and Significance of Temples*, Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, February, 1981. P.6

same idea is expressed several times in the *puranas*. The temples from the ancient times are the places, where the mankind can worship the 'Divine One'. A great Tamil saint 'Avvayar' says that "one should not stay in a town where there is no temple"<sup>2</sup>. The same idea is expressed by several ancient writers. Worship of Gods in temples purifies the hearts, controls passions and enables the devotees to remember the Lord always. Most of the ancient temples have *sthalapuranas*, in which the local history of the temples is eulogized by incorporating the *paورانic* legends. They used to highlight the significance of that particular place and the people of high order who visited them. Each region of India is known after a particular God, all though the temples exist everywhere throughout the country.

A special adoration and attachment to the Lord *Narasimha* is found in southern part of the country in general and in Andhra Pradesh in particular. Probably it may be the reason that the Ahobalam, a popular Narasimhakshetra, is located and it is believed that the manifestation of Narasimha was appeared for the first time at Ahobalam. Here an attempt is being made to study some important temples dedicated to Lord *Narasimha* in India with their legendary background in general and with a special emphasis on the temples of Andhra Pradesh.

## I) ANDHRA PRADESH

In Andhra Pradesh the Lord *Narasimha* commands more popularity on par with Rama and Krishna. There are a number of ancient *Narasimha* Temples and most of them have their own '*sthalapuranas*'. They claim that they are part and parcel of one or another *mahapuranas* or *upapuranas*.

As per the survey made by M. Narasimha Charyulu, there are 169 *Narasimha* temples known, where worship is going on even today in Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh itself<sup>3</sup> and Avanca Satyanarayana in his *Nrsimhastotramalika* enumerates more than 350 *Narasimha* temples in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>4</sup> Now among the several *Narasimha* Temples of Andhra Pradesh, a few important and ancient ones will be discussed along with their mythological legends.

### 1) Ahobilam (or) Ahobalam

Ahobilam is a shrine dedicated to Lord *Narasimha* and a centre of great antiquity. It is called '*Singavel Kunram*' in Tirumangai Alvar's<sup>5</sup> Pasurams in Tamil. It is one of the 108 *divyadesam*'s of *vaishnavas* as praised by Alvars. It is situated in the Nallamalai range of hills at a distance of 40 miles from Nandyal Railway station of Kurnool District, A.P. It is also known as '*Tarksyadri*'. The Nallamala range of mountains is regarded as the personification of the divine serpent *Adisesha*, whose head lies at 'Tirumala' middle at 'Ahobilam' and tail is at Srisailam. It has got popularity as "*Navanarasimhakshetra*' (Ap-II, p.1) as all the nine forms of *Narasimha* are located within the radius of 5 krosas (10 miles) and hence this place is called '*pancakrosikshetra*'. The nine *Narasimhas* are:

1. *Ahobila/ Ugra/ Guha Narasimha*
2. *Bhargava Narasimha*
3. *Yogananda Narasimha*
4. *Chatravata Narasimha*
5. *Kroda or Varaha Narasimha*

<sup>3</sup> Narasimhacharyulu, M. History of the cult of *Narasimha* in Telengana. Pp22-24

<sup>4</sup> Satyanarayana, A. *Nrsimhastotramalika*, pp.143-169.

<sup>5</sup> There are 12 Alvars (Vaishnavite Saints) who composed *Divya Prabhandams* between 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. they are 1) Pogai Alvar (7<sup>th</sup> cen.) 2) Bhothathalvar (7<sup>th</sup>) 3) Peyalvar (7<sup>th</sup>) 4) Tirumala sai alvar (7<sup>th</sup>) 5) Kulasekhara alvar (8<sup>th</sup>) 6) Thondaradippodi alvar (8<sup>th</sup>) 7) Thiruppan alvar (8<sup>th</sup>) 8) Thirumangai alvar (8<sup>th</sup>) 9) Nammalvar (9<sup>th</sup>) 10) Madhura kavi alvar (9<sup>th</sup>) 11) Periyalvar (9<sup>th</sup>) and 12) Andal (9<sup>th</sup>)

6. *Karanja or Saranga Narasimha*

7. *Malola/ Lakshmi Narasimha*

8. *Jvala Narasimha*

9. *Pavana Narasimha*

There are lower Ahobalam and Upper Ahobalam in this Kshetra. Upper Ahobalam is approximately thirteen kilometers from the lower Ahobalam and 2800 feet above sea level can be reached by a foot path or a drive. It is an arduous task to trek to the upper Ahobalam from the foot hills. On the southern slopes of the mountain amidst thick forest along side the river *Bhavanashini* that flows through several valleys, there is a temple of the Lord Ugranarasimha (1). This is the main temple of Navanarasimhas of this Ahobalakshetra and the Lord manifested here from a cave. Therefore the Lord is also called as Ahobalanarasimha and Guhanarasimha. He is seated in *sukhasana* with the left leg folded and right leg hanging down with two hands and both the hands are engaged in tearing open the chest of the demon. The Goddess is seen on the chest of the Lord in the form of Srivatsa. There is an idol of Chenchulakshmi in this temple.

At lower Ahobalam, in front of the rajagopuram, there is a temple of *Prahladavaradanarasimha* seated in *sukhasana* with left leg folded and the right leg hanging down with four hands. The upper two hands hold the conch and the disc, while the lower two hands are in *abhaya* and *varada* postures. 'The *Prahladavaradanarasimha* is not the part of Navanarasimhas of this *kshetra*, however any description of Navanarasimhas begins first with Ugranarasimha of upper Ahobala and continues with the description of *Prahladavaradanarasimha* at lower Ahobalam and the other eight Narasimhas' – says Dr. M. S. Rajajee.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Dr. M. S. Rajajee, *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, Pp. 36-37. However, Sri N. Ramesan in his *Temples and Legends of Andhra Pradesh Considers Prahladavaradanarasimha*

About two kilometers from lower Ahobalam, on the top of a hill there is a shrine for *Bhargavanarasimha* (2). Since this is said to be a place where Lord Parasurama performed penance, the Lord here is called as *Bhargavanarasimha*. The Lord is seated on a small base with four hands. The upper two hands hold the conch and the disc, while the lower two hands are depicted as actually tearing open the abdomen of the demon carrying a sword in his hand. To the south east of lower Ahobalam, about two kilometers away there is a shrine for *Yaganandanarasimha* (3). The Lord is in Yoga mudra with Yogapatta going around the Lord, who is seated in *padmasana*. He had four hands and holds the conch and the disc in upper two hands, while lower two hands rested on his knees. It is believed that the Lord taught several yoga postures to Prahlada in this place. In the same direction at about four kilometers from lower Ahobalam, there is a shrine for *Chatravatanarasimha* (4). Since the image here below a canopy which looks like a banyan tree, the Lord is called *Chatravatanarasimha*. The Lord is seated in a cross legged manner with four hands. The upper two hands carries the conch and the disc and the lower left hand rests on his thigh and lower right hand is in *abhaya* posture.

About two kilometers from upper Ahobalam there are *Vadadri* and *Garudadri* hills. There is a shrine for *Krodanaraimha* (5) otherwise called as *Varahanarasimha* on a hill. The Lord *Varahanarasimha* has a head of a boar, a tail of a lion and a human body with two hands. One kilometer from upper Ahobalam there is a shrine for *Karanjanarasimha* (6). The shrine is under a Karanja tree (kanuga tree). The Lord here holds the disc and the *Saranga* (bow) in upper two hands and lower two hands are in *dhyanamudra*. So Lord here is called as *Saranganarasimha* also. About two kilometers from *Ahobalanarasimha*, there is a shrine for *Lakshminarasimha* also called as *Malolanarasimha*

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among Navanarasimhas by replacing Bhargavanarasimha of Rajajec and also Karanja/Saranganarasimha is treated as Karandanaraimha.

(7), who is the touring deity of Ahobalamath. The Lord here is in *sukhasana* with the left leg folded and the right leg hanging down. He holds the conch and the disc in upper hands and the lower right hand in *abhaya* posture while lower left hand is around the Goddess. There is a temple of *Jvalanarasimha* (8) at a higher elevation on a top of a hill and about four kilometers from upper Ahobalam. This is said to be place where the ferocity of Lord Narasimha reached maximum. A pillar from where the Lord is said to be emerged can be seen here on this lofty hill. The Lord here is with hands. He holds the demon tight with a pair of hands; a pair of hands are engaged in tearing open the belly of the demon; a pair of hands holds the conch and the disc and the last pair of hands holds the entrails of the demon aloft as a garland. The last and ninth form of Lord Narasimha of this *kshetra* is *Pavananarasimha* (9), which is about six kilometers from upper Ahobalam. Since the Lord of this place can render the world as sacred (*Pavana*), he is called *Pavananarasimha*. The image is similar to that of *Lakshminarasimha* shrine but the difference is the Lord here is covered under a seven hooded *Adishesha* acting as canopy. Thus the Nava Narasimhas are being worshipped in this holy place.

The *kshetramahatmya* of this shrine tells us that *Garuda*, ordained by his father, meditated upon the Lord *Narasimha* on this mountain in a cave for a long period. The Lord *Narasimha* appeared before *Garuda* and fulfilled his desires. Hence, it is believed that this mountain had acquired the significant name "*Garudadrī*" or '*Tarksyadrī*'. The cave where Lord *Narasimha* manifested before *Garuda* is called "*Guha Narasimha*". Here the Lord *Narasimha* is said to be '*Svayambhu*' i.e., Self manifested.

Another legend, which is very popular among the tribal people of this place, is that while Lord *Vishnu* manifested as *Narasimha*, Goddess *Laksmi* was born in a tribal community. After slaying *Hiranyakasipu*,

they both got married. This love of *Vishnu* and *Chenchulakshmi* is very popular in many folk songs though there is no trace of it in the *Puranas*. There are many legends about the *Tirthas* located around this sacred place like the *Raktakundam*, *Lanjakoneru* etc. The *Raktakundam* is a small pond near the temple. It is stated that after killing *Hiranyakasipu*, Lord *Narasimha* had cleansed his hands in this *tirtham*. This is the reason attributed for the reddish colour of the water in this tank. The *Lanjakoneru* is also a small and beautiful tank near the temple. It is stated that once a courtesan as soon as she had darshan of the Lord repented for her past life and built a tank near the temple. Thence the pond is '*Lanjakoneru*'.

It is known by the inscriptions that the great Vikramaditya of the Western Calukya kings (1076 – 1106 AD) worshipped the *Mulavigraha* of this temple. Prataparudra of Kakatiya Kings visited this place and desired to cast golden Siva Lingam, but the figure emerged was that of *Narasimha* only. Perturbed by the experience, he meditated upon *Narasimha* and presented golden *Utsvavigraha*<sup>7</sup>. Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire presented a golden plate and a diamond necklace to the Lord<sup>8</sup>.

Once Ahobalam was ransacked by Kutub Shahi forces and the idol of *Narasimha* of Ahobalam was taken away to Golconda fort by them. According to Farista, the author of Golconda Chronicle, Sultan Ibrahim Ali Qutub Shah began to vomit blood after seeing the idol and died on the same night<sup>9</sup>.

The famous math of Vaishnavites known as 'Ahobila Math' is functioning having Ahobalam as its headquarters and the heads of this math are called jeers. It is stated that Lord *Narasimha* directed Adivann

<sup>7</sup> Ramesan, N, *Temples and legends of AP*. Pp 27-28

<sup>8</sup> Manatirtha Kshetralu. (Telugu), Visva Hindu Parishad P. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Nrsimha Priya, March, 83. P. 12



Satagopa, the first jeer of Ahobilamath to take the *Utsavavighraha* from place to place so that the people can get the benefit of his Darshan. Following this tradition, the successive Jeers of the math used to take the '*Malolanarasimha*' otherwise called '*Laksminarasimha*' to several places and are propagate the *Narasimhatattva* or *Saranagati*. The lord *Malolanarasimha* has been always on tour as the presiding deity of Sri Ahobalam Math. Besides the main temple at Ahobilam, many Narasimha temples are built at Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi and are being maintained by this math. The annual *Brahmotsavam*, which is the important festival of this place will takes place during *Sukla Paksa* of *Phalguna month*. A special attention will be paid on the day of *Narasimha Jayanti*, which falls on *Vaisakha sudda Caturdasi* with *Svati Nakshatram*.

## 2) Simhacalam:

*Simhacalam* is located about 18 kms to Visakhapatnam, District Head Quarters well connected with a road from Visakhapatnam. This is also called *Simhagiri* or *Simhadri*. This shrine is dedicated to Lord *Narasimha* and the presiding deity is called *Varahanarasimha Swamy* and locally known as '*Simhadri Appana*' (Ap-II,P2). This is a famous and rich temple of the northern circars of Andhra Pradesh. The temple is about 800 feet above the sea level.

The deity *Varahanarasimha* is sculptured in *tribhanga* posture, having two hands with the head of a lion and a human torso. Originally the image is of furious, to appear or to pacify him, the image is covered with the tones of sandal paste thrice a year. For this purpose, sandalwood will be specially brought from Villiputtur of Tamilnadu. With this paste, the image appears like a Sivalingam through out the year. The sandal paste will be removed only once a year i.e. on the day of Akshayatriya during May, which is also celebrated as *Chandanotsava*

with religious pomp and fervor. Only on this day the original form of *Varahanarasimha* can be seen by the devotees.

The puranic legend of the temple is connected right from the period of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada. It is said that the demon king Hiranyakasipu threw his son Prahlada in the ocean and placed this mountain over his head to press him down. Vishnu in order to protect Prahlada slightly tilted the mountain to enable him to come out safely. Later in memory of the incident, Prahlada has constructed this temple.<sup>10</sup>

The *sthalapurana*, which is divided into 32 chapters, narrates the story of Prahlada. The Narasimha myth mainly follows the *Vishnupurana* and the *Bhagavatapurana*. The only new information referred here is that Prahlada was a guardian in *Vaikuntha* in his previous birth and his name then was Sumukha. When the gods headed by Brahma visited *Vaikuntha* to appraise the atrocities of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, they were obstructed by Sumukha. When they met Vishnu and informed not only the atrocities of demons but also make a mention of the misbehavior of Sumukha. Vishnu apart from assuring the destruction of the demon king Hiranyakasipu he also tells them that Sumukha would be serving the cause for his death. When Sumukha pleaded for a pardon, Lord Vishnu says that he will pardon the offence done to him but not the offences done to his devotees. As per the ordain of Vishnu, Sumukha has born as Prahlada. The remaining story agrees with the other Narasimha myths available in the *Puranas*. It is in this *sthalamahatmyam* that Ahobilam is mentioned as a place where Hiranyakasipu was killed by Narasimha.<sup>11</sup>

The *Sthalapurana* gives an account of the renovation of this temple which was in disuse and decay for a long period though it was

<sup>10</sup> Ramesan, N. *Temples and legends of A.P.* pp. 136-137.

<sup>11</sup> Narsimha Priya, March 1983 P.P. 14-16.

founded by none other than Prahlada himself. The account runs thus: "Once there was a king by name Purarava of *Chandravamsa* who acquired a divine air car (*puspakavimana*) as a boon from Brahma. He saw Urvasi on *Kailasa* Mountain and both fell in love with one another. While touring, they were pleased by the beautiful flora and fauna of *Simhacala* Mountain and settled there itself. Urvasi by her divine nature noticed that it was once the abode of Lord Narasimha. They both wanted to unearth the Lord and renovate the temple for the benefit of the common men.

Purarava through his penance at the nearby *gangadhara* rivulet could identify the exact place where the image was hidden. Accordingly they unearthed the image and renovated and consecrated it. In spite of his best efforts, when Pururava could not find the feet of the Lord, the divine voice consoled him not to worry about his feet and the mere sight is sufficient to get salvation. The voice also instructed that the deity should be covered with sandal paste on all days except on one day in a year viz., on Akshaya Tritiya when the sight of the Lord in his pristine form bestows salvation.<sup>12</sup> Correspondingly on the Akshaya *Tritiya* day, even to this day, the *candanayatra* festival is being conducted on *sukla paksa tadiya* of *Vaisakha* month. On that day the sandal paste, which is applied three times a year on *Vaisakha Pournima*, *Jyesta Pournima* and *Ashada Pournima* is removed and devotees can have the darshan of the original image of the Lord, which is believed to bestow liberation upon the devotees.

The 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Simhacalakshetramahatmyam* mentions thirty two forms (*Vibhutis*)<sup>13</sup> of Lord Narasimha among which are found both fearful and peaceful aspects. They are: 1) *Kumda Padah*, 2) *Gopa Simhah*, 3) *Divya Simhah*, 4) *Brahmanda Simhah*, 5) *Samudra Simhah*,

Ramesan, N. *Temples and Legends of A.P.* pp 139-140.  
Nrsimha Priya, March, 1983. PP. 15 - 16.

6) *Visvarupa Simhah*, 7) *Vira Simhah*, 8) *Krura Simhah* 9) *Bibhatsa Simhah*, 10) *Raudra Simhah*, 11) *Dhumra Simhah*, 12) *Agni Simhah*, 13) *Vyaghra Simhah*, 14) *Bidala Simhah*, 15) *Bhima Simhah*, 16) *Patala Simhah*, 17) *Akasa Simhah*, 18) *Vakra Simhah*, 19) *Chatra Simhah*, 20) *Sanika Simhah*, 21) *Satva Simhah*, 22) *Adbhuta Simhah*, 23) *Vega Simhah*, 24) *Vidarana Simhah*, 25) *Ghora Simhah*, 26) *Siddha Simhah*, 27) *Santa Simhah*, 28) *Yogananda Simhah*, 29) *Lakshmi Narasimhah*, 30) *Bhadra Simhah*, 31) *Raja Simhah* and 32) *Varaha Narasimhah*. The last of these i.e., *Varaha Narasimha* is the presiding deity of *Simhacalam*. All the murtis are sculptured on the *Kalyanamandapa* of the Lord. One of the pillars of *mukhamandapa* of the temple is named '*Kappam Stambham*' and the popular legend is that this pillar has the power of curing cattle diseases and also barrenness among women. The deity here faces west instead of facing east as usual. Generally the deities facing east bestow prosperity and facing west bestows victory.

It can be understood by the inscriptions available that many kings have developed the temple either by donating valuable ornaments or by constructing or renovating the *mandapas* etc. Sri Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagar emperor visited this temple twice in 1516 and 1519 AD and offered gem-set studded *Patakam* (*pacchalapatakam*) and gold ornamented *Kavacam*, which can be seen even today. It can be known from the inscriptions dated 1099 AD of King Kullottanga Chola; dated 1137 AD of Velnati Chief Gonka III; Eastern Ganga Kings of Kalinga; King Narasimha I; Reddy kings of Rajahmundry, the Vishnu Vardhan Chakravarthy of Panchadharla and others visited this shrine and contributed to enriching the temple.. *Simhacalam* is surrounded by large mountains upon which grow many plants of great medicinal value.

There is a perennial spring called Gangammadhara on this hill and is believed that this spring has medicinal properties that can cure bodily ailments of the devotees, if they take a bath in the spring.

The temple artwork is similar to that of Konark with elephants, flowers and plants carved on the walls and lintels. *Kalyanotsavam* of the Lord is being celebrated here on the eleventh day of *Sukla Paksa*, *Chaitramasa* every year.

Though the presiding deity of this temple is Sri *Varaha Narasimha*, the *Kestrapala* is Siva and the guardians of the gate are Anjaneya and Kalabhairava.<sup>14</sup> *Chandanayatra* and *Kalyonatsavam* are the important festivals in this shrine. Besides all festivals, *Vyasa Pournima* and *Ashadha Pournimas* are also celebrated here.

### 3) Yadagirigutta:

Yadagiri or Yadagirigutta is situated in the Bhongir Taluk of Nalgonda District in Andhra Pradesh and is about 69 kilometers north of Hyderabad. This temple of *Lakshminarasimha* is situated at the height of 300 feet from the sea level. The deity of this temple is *Lakshminarasimha* (Ap-II,p2). The deity is very popular and powerful. It is believed that the deity *Lakshminarasimha* fulfills all the desires of the devotees and cures the incurable diseases and protects from the influences of witch crafts, black magic and of planets. The devotees believe if the Lord is worshipped here for 40 days, it will alleviate the incurable diseases of devotees.

*Sri Yadagirimahatmyam*<sup>15</sup> a modern work, gives the legendary background of the *Kshetra* says that in *Tretayuga*, a sage by name *Yadava*, desiring the *sakshatakara* of Lord *Narasimha* performed

<sup>14</sup> Mana Yatra Kshetralu (Tclugu) pp 71-72

<sup>15</sup> Narasimhacharya Govardhanam, 'Sri Yadagiri Mahatmyam', Yadagirigutta, 1979.

severe penance on this hill. First Hanuman appeared in his dream and informed that Lord Narasimha was in the cave of the hill. Next day Yadava took bath in *Vishnupuskarini* and found the cave after a search. He performed severe penance there. Lord Narasimha appeared before Yadava and offered a boon. The sage requested the Lord to show his three forms of *Jvalanarasimha*, *Gandabherundanarasimha* and *Yoganandanarasimha*. Accordingly, Vishnu appeared in all these forms. Not satisfied with this, the sage requested the Lord to stay there permanently. It is believed that the Lord settled there in the form of *Lakshminarasimha* as desired by Yadava with his consort. Thus this hill was named Yadavagiri and in due course changed to Yadagiri. It is believed that Prahlada, when Narasimha manifested and killed Hiranyakasipu requested the Lord to reside there permanently. But lord Narasimha promised him to reside in the cave of Yadagirigutta.

The *Kshetramahatmyam* of Yadagiri by Sadhu Venkatanarayana Swamy slightly differs from the above. According to it, an eight year old boy of Yadava community was happened to be the disciple of a great sage Ugra Tapasvi a resident of the Himalayas. By the time the boy attained sixteen years of age, the sage taught him all the dharmas and knowing that his life was coming to an end directed the boy 'Yadava' to go to south and meditate on a hill, which is named after him. Yadava as advised by his preceptor reached this hill and meditated on Lord Narasimha and got his '*sakshatkara*'. The remaining story runs as earlier one.<sup>16</sup>

Another legend which is popular among the local people is that the Lord appeared in a dream to a village officer and revealed his presence in a nearby cave on the hill top. He also ordained to arrange regular worship for him. Accordingly the officer found the cave and the

Narasimha image therein and appointed a priest to conduct regular worship<sup>17</sup>.

The *Kshetrapala* of this shrine is Hanuman. Soon after entering into the main entrance of the temple, there is *Anjaneya* shrine on the right side. Nearby is a horizontal cave with a gap of about 10 inches. It is said to be the exact spot, where *Gandabherundanarasimha* manifested himself before Yadava. The oil lamp kept there is still burning throughout indicates the importance of the place. (*Gandabherunda* is a mythological gigantic eagle bird with two heads). The sanctum sanctorum is a cave and this cave is formed with a stooping roof of five feet height. So naturally one who visits this place has to bend down the head and bow to the Lord involuntarily. At the end of the cave passage, two rocks are fastened with each other. On the left side rock, we find *Yoganandanarasimha* aspect of the Lord and on the right side an image is in the shape of a serpent ending in a tail. This is known as *Jvalanarasimha*. It is believed that the divine serpent still moves around there. As the two images are not clearly visible to the devotees, the idols of Lakshmi and Narasimha are kept near the original images. There are different temples existing at different places on this hill. The principal one is the shrine of *Yoganandalakshminarasimha*. There are two separate shrines for *Rajyalakshmidēvi* and *Godadēvi*. There is another shrine for *Lakshminarasimha*. An ant hill found on the top of the hill is called *Jvalanarasimha*. It is said that 'Svamipuskarini' or 'Vishnukundam' was dug by the sage Yadava with his nails. The water of this tank is considered to be very sacred. The important festivals of this place are *Kalyanotsavam* which is celebrated for ten days in the month of *Phalguna* every year from *Suddha Dvitiya* to *Dvadashi* and *Narsimhajayanti* along with all the other important Hindu festivals.

#### 4) DHARMAPURI:

This is one of the oldest villages <sup>18</sup> and is about 65 kilometers from Karimnagar District of Andhra Pradesh. It is on the western bank of Godavari which flows southwards. There are two Narasimha temples old and new. However the old temple is very famous and the Lord *Yoganandalaksminarasimha* is the presiding deity in both the temples. Besides these temples, there are many more temples in this village like Venkateswara, Srisitaramachandra, Dattatreya, etc. However, Narasimha is the presiding deity of this village. There are four *tirthas* around the temple namely *Brahmapuskarini*, *Cintamanisarovaram*, *Varahatirtham* and *Vimalatirtham*, where pilgrims used to take bath in those *tirthas*. A few ghats on the bank of Godavari like *Brahmagundam*, *Cakratirtham*, *Yagagundam*, *Vasistagundam*, *Satyavatigundam*, and *Gopikathirtham*<sup>19</sup> are very popular. Dharmapuri is not only a popular place of pilgrimage but also a centre of Vedic studies.

Two *sthalapuranas* of same name i.e. '*Dharmapuri Kshetramahatmyam*' are available. The first is said to be the part and parcel of the *Brahmandapurana* dated 928 AD and the other of the *Skandapurana*, dated 1767 AD<sup>20</sup>. The greatness of this place is described in these *kshetramahatmyams*. After giving the narration of Narasimha myth, which is identical with the version of the *Bhagavatapurana* version, the story takes a change after the manifestation of Narasimha. When Narasimha was fighting with Hiranyakasipu, the demon king sought the help of the Lord Siva and Siva who was very kind to his staunch devotee had taken the form of a Sarabha to help his devotee in the fight. Then Narasimha had to exert his full strength to fight with Sarabha, who was none other than Siva.

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<sup>18</sup> Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer, Karimnagar p 245.

<sup>19</sup> Narasimha caryulu, M. History of the cult of Narasimha in Telangana p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid p. 153.



Finally though Sarabha was killed, Narasimha could not control his wrath and was wandering in this fearful form in the *Dandakaranya*. All the worlds trembled and Brahma observed penance to pacify the Lord. At the same time a king by name Dharmavarma was doing penance at this place for Brahma and being advised by Brahma, who appeared before him started his penance to please Narasimha. As advised by a divine voice, Brahma sent Prahlada and Narada to pacify Narasimha and finally was able to pacify Narasimha with many eulogies. Pleased by the penance of Brahma and Dharma Varma, Narasimha came to Dharmapuri and settled there in the benign form and the place was named Dharmapuri after the king Dharmavarma<sup>21</sup>.

Among the images of Vishnu, the Narasimha image which is malignant in nature is recommended to install out side the villages or on the hill tops. The yoga posture of Vishnu also should not be in the vicinity of villages. The Agamas prescribe that a benign image (*santamurti*) should be set up to counter the evil effects or a tank must be dug in front of such temples. Hence here the images of Anjaneya are installed in all the eight directions of Narasimha temple. This aspect is known as '*Hanumadastadigbandhanam*' is intended to pacify the Lord Narsimha. An idol of Chenchulakshmi is installed on the left thigh of the Lord Narasimha.

The interesting feature of this temple is that there is an installation of the image of Brahma, which is rather rare. The connection of Brahma to this place is well known by the *sthalamahatmyam*. It is said that Brahma dug a tank in this place to pacify Narasimha, when the later was in full wrath. Lord Narasimha after being pacified asked Brahma to stay along with him and named the tank dug by him as *Brahmapuskarini*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid pp 166-169

At the entrance of the temple, there is an image of Yama. The legend which connects Yama to this place is this. "To ward off his sins, once Yama travelled from place to place and at last when he had a bath in a tank of Dharmapuri, his sins were washed out. As a mark of gratitude he visited Lord Narasimha and paid his rich tributes. Pleased Narasimha named the tank after the name of Yama and ordained that who ever take a dip in the pond would be free from the troubles from Yama after death<sup>22</sup>.

There is Satyavati temple near the new Narasimhaswamy temple. It is said that once Satyavati and her husband Sesha had come to this place and took a bath in the river Godavari. Immediately Sesha transformed into a handsome man by name Citrangada. It is believed that Satyavati constructed a tall pillar to prove her devotion to this Lord. The pillar exists there still now and the tank in which the couple taken bath is named *Satyavatigundam*.<sup>23</sup>

Besides the normal Hindu festivals, the important festivals of this temple are *Kalyanotsavam* in *Phalguna* month; *Dolotsavam* on *Nrsimhajayanti* and *Rathotsvam* of the Lord.

##### 5) Mangalagiri:

Mangalagiri is situated on Vijayawada – Guntur road of Andhra Pradesh. It is about 14 kms from Vijayawada. There are three Narasimha temples in Mangalagiri. One is *Panakalanarasimha*, who is the presiding deity of this place and the temple is located on the top of the hill (Ap-II,p2). Another one is *Laksminarasimha* at the foot of the hill and the third is *Gandalanarasimha* at the top of the hill. This is one of the oldest temples in Andhra Pradesh. The peculiar custom of this temple is that *panaka* or jaggery-water is offered as oblations to this

<sup>22</sup> Ibid p 181.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid p. 182.

deity. The *panakam* is actually poured into the mouth of the Lord. People believe that the deity accepts the offering and being satisfied with it he throws out a part of it. This later part is considered as the *prasadam* of the Lord. This aspect of pouring the offering directly into the mouth of the deity is found nowhere. This special phenomenon of this place attracts the pilgrims from different parts of the country. A gargling sound is clearly audible, when *panaka* is poured into the mouth of the Lord as if he is actually drinking<sup>24</sup>. The sound becomes shriller and shriller as long as the Lord is drinking. Whatever the quantity offered either a cup or a drumful of *panaka*, it is said that the Lord throws out half the quantity of the offering. This happens not only once or twice, but continues with each offering made by the devotees. The most surprising fact is that though the jaggery and jaggery water is being used in this place, not even a single ant is found anywhere nearby. Because of the *panaka* being used as offering to this Narasimha, he is called *Panakalanarasimha* and also called as *Pannanarasimham*<sup>25</sup>.

This shrine is said to be referred in the *Brahmavaivartapurana* as one of the eight important *Kshetras* of Vishnu, where the Lord manifested himself. They are 1) *Srirangam* 2) *Srimushnam* 3) *Naimisham* 4) *Puskaram* 5) *Salagramadri* 6) *Totadri* 7) *Narayanasramam* 8) *Venkatadri*. *Totadri* is the present Mangalagiri. It is believed that this hill was called 'Totadri' in *Krtayuga*; 'Stotadri' in *Tretayuga*; 'muktyadri' in *Dvaparayuga* and 'Mangaladri' or 'Mangalagiri' in *Kaliyuga*. The offering to be given to this Lord is said to be *amrta* (nectar) in *Krtayuga*; ghee in *Tretayuga*, milk in *Dvaparayuga* and jaggery water in *Kaliyuga*<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Ramesan, Temples and Legends of A.P. p. 95

<sup>25</sup> Mana yatra sthalalu, (Telugu) P 79.

<sup>26</sup> Nrsimha Priya, March, 1983. P. 26

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According to the *Sthalapurana* of this temple once, a great devotee *Hrsvasrngi*, son of King Pariyatra did penance to propitiate Sri Narasimha. The Lord appeared before him and intended to give a boon and *Hrsvasrngi* requested him to stay on his head and when the lord agreed, *Hrsvasrngi* took the form of a mountain resembling an elephant and Lord Narasimha stayed on that hill.<sup>27</sup> It is also said that *Hrsvasrngi*, who was born with bodily deformities had travelled all the Kshetras in order to get rid of his deformities and finally reached this place and started penance. But Pariyatra, the father was not happy over his son's penance and tried to dissuade him. To avoid the interference of his father, *Hrsvasrngi* had taken the form of a mountain resembling an elephant and offered his body as an abode to Narasimha. Since a true devotee offered his body as an abode of the Lord, this place is considered *mangala* (auspicious) and the place is called Mangaladri or Mangalagiri. Even now this mountain appears in the shape of an elephant from a distance and the temple on the hill appears as the mouth of the elephant.<sup>28</sup>

It is said that once a demon Namuci pleased Brahma by his severe penance and acquired a boon not to die by any thing that is wet or dry. Being adamant with pride, he tortured all the worlds. Then Vishnu gave his *Cakra* (Disc) covered with foam to Indra and he himself entered into the disc in the form of Narasimha. When Indra fought with Namuci and discharged the disc, Namuci entered the cave of Mangalagiri. Soon after the *cakra* reached the entrance of the cave, the demon Namuci vomited blood and died immediately as a result of the glances of Narasimha, who had entered himself into the *cakra*. The presiding deity of this place is called *Sricakranarasimhaswamy*<sup>29</sup> apart from *Panakalanarasimhaswamy*. In this temple there is no idol of Lord

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ramesan, N. Temples and Legends of A.P. p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> Nrsimha Priya, March, 1983, p27.

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except the mouth sculptured widely opened of about 15 centi meters on the wall of the mountain into which the devotees pour panaka as offering.

Another legend says that in *Krtayuga*, Srilakshmi had come out of the milky ocean when it was being churned. The gods constructed a pond by bringing water from all the holy rivers. After she took a bath in that *puskarini* Goddess Lakshmi was given to Vishnu as his consort. That *puskarini* is said to be on this hill and is called *Lakshmi puskarini*.

The Lakshminarasimha Temple, which is at the foot of the hill, traces its origin to the time of Dharmaraja the eldest of Pandavas. It is said that Dharmaraja installed the deity of Laksminarasimha in this temple, when Bhima brought the salagrama.

On the top of the hill there is no deity but there is a facility to put a *deepam* (lamp). If any one is afflicted with miseries, then they go there and light the lamp. It is believed that their miseries will be cleared off. This place is called '*Gandalayam*'. The lamp is visible from many surrounding villages. *Ksheravriksam* (milky tree) on the Mangalagiri hill is a great attraction. It is believed that women would get children if they worship this tree. A legend popular among the local people is that a Goldsmith was appointed to prepare Utsavavigrahas with pancaloham (mixture of five metals) but inspite of his skill and care, the metals kept separating and could not be mixed. Then it is said that a divine voice informed him that a human sacrifice was required to complete the mix. Then his only son came to him asking for water. The goldsmith immediately threw his son into the molten mixture and was able to complete his work and beautiful idols were made. After completing the work, he was gloomy over the fate of his son and called out in agony

'come my son, now I will give you water'. To his surprise the body of his son jumped out of the image and stood before his father.<sup>30</sup>

On the right side of the steps to reach the temple, there is a stone inscription by Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire. A little further up, there are foot prints of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Midway on the steps there is a temple of Panakalanarasimhaswamy with mouth widely opened. Behind the temple to the west of which is a tunnel believed to lead to Undavelli caves on the banks of the Krishna and sages used to go that way to take a bath in the river. Now the cave is very dark and the way cannot be seen.

Anjaneya is the *Kshetrapalaka* of this place. It is stated that Anjaneya wished to follow Lord Rama to Vaikuntha, but was advised by Rama to stay at this place only to bestow grace on humanity. It is said that the devotee Prahlada; the sage Mandakarni; Aniruddha, husband of Muktangada; Pandavas; Vaikhanasacarya; Vallabhacarya; Caitanya Mahaprabhu; Balamba etc. have worshipped the Lord Narsimha in this place<sup>31</sup>.

Sri Panakalanarasimha Swamy's *Brahmotsavam* is a very important annual festival in Mangalagiri. The celebrations were said to be inaugurated by Dharmaraja at the behest of Lord Krishna. At present the festival is celebrated for 11 days in a grand manner commencing from *Phalgunasuddhasasti* to *chaturdasi*, the marriage of *Shantanarasimhaswamy* with Sridevi and Bhudevi is celebrated. All other Hindu festivals are also celebrated.

## 6) MATTAPALLI:

Mattapalli is the centre of a cluster of Narasimha temples, which are placed in all the four directions Vedadri, Vadapally, Ketavaram and Mangalagiri. Together the five temples are called 'Panca Narasimha Kshetras.' Mattapalli is a town of Huzurnagar taluk of Nalgonda district. The abode of Sri Lakshminarasimha, who is also known as *Yoganandalakshminarasimha* is located in a cave beside the river Krishna Ap-II, P2). Other deities installed in this shrine are Rajyalakshmitayar and Chenculakshmitayar.

A local legend<sup>32</sup> states that this Mattapalli cave shrine of Lord Narasimha was the place where only the Risis headed by Bharadvaj used to worship the Lord daily from the time immemorial. Later in Kaliyuga, the sages wanted to throw open this place for common people to make them to have the grace of the Lord. Once the lord appeared in a dream to Machireddy, the ruler of Thangeda situated on the other side of Krishna river and instructed him to trace his abode located near a tree Vedapatri and construct a temple to him. Since the place was in the midst of a dense and lovely forest Machireddy could not locate the spot, the Lord insisted again to search near an 'Aare' tree hidden behind the foliage. Machireddy being led by a monkey found the cave, where the image of Sri Lakshminarasimha was found in a sitting posture under the protection of Adishesha's hooded canopy, holding *sankha*, *cakra* and *gada*. He then revealed it to the public and constructed *Mukhalaya*. The sanctum sanctorum of this Lord is inside a cave facing west. Along the wall west to the lord is his consort Rajyalaksmi and on the right can be seen a passage at once leading to the river (passage now is blocked). Sage Bharadvaja and other sages were believed to have used this path. It is said that the lord manifested on a rock, located on the back side of

the sanctum sanctorum. Another rock is spread like the hood of a sesa over it. Besides the normal festivals *Kalyanotsavam* (around May) and *Vaikunta Ekadasi* (around January) are celebrated here with much religious fervor.

## 7) VEDADRI:

The Vedadri Lakshminarasimha Temple is located on the river Krishna nearly 10 kms from Chillakallu near Vijayawada. Yoganandanarasimha is the presiding deity of this shrine (Ap-II,p.2). A beautiful form of Narasimha in Yoga pose greets devotees on the entrance of the temple. The other deities of this place are Lord Varaha, Lakshmi Devi, Garuda and Hanuman. The *utsava* idols are extraordinary and impressive. In the waters of the Krishna River the Lord Narsimha can be found in *Salagrama* form, when the river is not in floods. Jvalanarasimha is on the top of the hill in an ant hill. Lord Veeranasimha is said to be behind the hill about 5 kms away from this place.

The *sthalapurana* of vedadri, which is said to be the part of Brahmanda purana<sup>33</sup> tells that after the Vedas were restored from the demon Somakasura, who had stolen vedas and was killed by Vishnu in Matsyavatara, the Vedas had taken a human form and requested Vishnu that they should be sanctified by his manifestation there. But the Lord Vishnu asked them to be in the form of salagramas in the bed of river Krishna and he would manifest in an appropriate time. Accordingly they had taken the forms of Salagramas and remained in the river Krishna. Vishnu, after killing Hiranyakasipu in Narasimha form recalling his assurance to the Vedas, had taken the *Jvalanarasimha* form and resided on the nearby hillock. On the request of Brahma in order to grace the devotees, he had taken *Salagramanarasimha* form on the bed



of river Krishna. Similarly yielding to the prayers of sage Rshyasruga and King Manu, he assumed the *Yoganandanarasimha* form and manifested in the middle of the hills in this area. Responding to the prayers *Vanadevatas* (forest goddesses) he manifested there as Laksminarasimha. Again the Lord manifested as *Veeranarasimha* on the top of nearby Garudadri. Thus this place has Panca Narasimha Murthis (five Narasimha forms) and this place came to know as Vedadri as the Lord manifested there on the pursuant to the assurance given to Vedas.

According to another story at the advent of Kaliyuga, people got frightened and approached sage Vyasa for an easy way to get salvation in Kaliyuga. The sage Vyasa assures them that there is no need to do rigorous penance like in earlier yugas, but simple and sincere worship is enough for the Lord's grace. When they all set out to find a right place for worship they reached this place on the banks of river Krishna and heard the recitation of the Vedas. They found the recitation was not by any human beings but was coming out from the mountains on its own. Hence it is believed that this place was called 'Vedadri'. The Telugu poets Errapragada, Srinatha and Sri Narayana teertha of *Sri Krishnaleeltarangni* praised this place in their works.

#### **8) Vadapalli:**

Vadapalli Narasimha Temple is situated in a town near Miryalaguda in Nalgonda District at the confluence of the river Krishna and river Musi. The temple with the presiding deity Laksminarasimha was constructed by the Kakatiya rulers in the 12 century (Ap-II.p.3). The local legend prevalent among masses here is that Vedavyasa knowing the sanctity of this place meditated upon Narasimha who appeared in his ugra form. Observing that the Lord's breath was filled with tremendous anger, Vyasa could realize that the Lord Narasimha came

to him just after killing Hiranyakasipu. He prayed the Lord to manifest there with his ugra form only as per his desire the Lord manifested accordingly to alleviate the sufferings of the devotees. It is said that the deity vibrates with breathing in and out even now<sup>34</sup>. As if to vouchsafe the veracity of the legend, the lamp kept near the face of the Lord, can be seen to quiver as the evidence of Lord breathing in and out, where as the second lamp below burns steadily.

The mythological legend<sup>35</sup> narrates that once, sage Agatsya was carrying on his shoulders a kavadi (a pole with two baskets on either ends) in which he was carrying the idols of Lord Kesava and Lord Siva. When he come to Vadapalli, which was the confluence of river Krishna and river Musi, he wanted to take a holy dip in the confluence and entrusted the kavadi to a boy, who was there looking after his goats, telling him not to rest it on the ground. The boy waited for some time and called the sage and finally when he was so tired he left it on the ground and went away. The sage returned and tried to lift the kavadi but in vain. A divine voice was heard stating that the Lord wishes to stay there only. Accordingly the sage installed Sri Menaksi Agastesvara and Lord Laksmi Narasimha at the confluence of two rivers. Over a period of time, the two shrines were covered by ant hills and were recovered by the time of Reddy kings in 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Here Kalyanatsovam will take place Just a day before the *Mahasivaratri* and indicates non-difference between Vishnu and Siva.

## 9) Ketavaram:

This is the shrine of Laksminarasimha and one of the 'Panca Narasimha Kshetras' situated on the bank of river Krishna and is in Sattenapalli town of Guntur District. Till 16<sup>th</sup> century it seems that this

<sup>34</sup> Nrsimha Dev Temples in A.P. Survey by Sun Staff Vadapalli available at [www.harekrishna.com](http://www.harekrishna.com)

<sup>35</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara, p. 73.

temple was a prominent place of worship as Vijayanagar Kings made several donations to this temple. There are three temples on the hillock called Narasimha Konda near this village Ketavaram. At the foot of the hillock, the temple for Lord Lakshminarasimha is situated; around 200 feet above there is another temple for Goddess Adilakshmi and on the top of the hill there is symbolic temple with only namam, the Vaishnavite mark on the rock.

#### 10) Antarvedi:

Antarvedi is situated in the East Godavari District. It is 10 kms from Narsapur of West Godavari District connected by a bridge and 24 kms from Razole of East Godavari District. Here the shrine of Lakshmi Narasimha is situated at the confluence (sangam) of the sea and Vasista Godavari, one of the seven branches of Godavari. This place is considered very sacred and is called "saptasagarasangama pradesham". This place is said to be the last and most important of the seven sacred bathing places along the river Godavari. On account of the sanctity attached to this place, it is called '*Daksina Kasi*'. The temple has some religious importance. The original temple is said to be submerged in the sea water and later the devotees constructed a new temple in 1823 AD,<sup>36</sup> at the present location.

Like in Simhacalam, here also the presiding deity faces west instead of the normal east. It is believed that as the Lord Brahma sanctified this place by performing the Rudrayaga and Vedic austerities and the place is named 'Antarvedi'. The legend<sup>37</sup> related to this place runs thus: The Sage Vasista, after joining the Goutami branch of Godavari into the sea, established his *Asram* and resided with his wife Arundhati. Raktavilocana, the son of Hiranyaksa got a boon from the

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<sup>36</sup> Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer, East Godavari District. P. 249.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee IAS (Rtd.), Sri Narasimha Avatara, Sri Ahobala Math, Hyderabad, 2002 pp. 79-80.

Lord Siva through severe penance. The boon is that the number of sand particles of ground that would be drenched by his blood in war could produce equal number of demons as strong as him and assist him in war and they should merge in him after the war would over. Once, on the instigation of Viswamitra, Raktavilocana killed all the hundred sons of Vasistha, when the latter was in *Brahmaloka*. On his return Vasistha prayed for Lord Narsimha and requested him to prevent Raktavilocana from wreaking further destruction. The Lord Narasimha finding the demons being produced from the blood particles of the demon, created Mayasakti to lick the blood before it touch the ground. The Lord then chopped off the hands of the demon and killed him along with other asura fighters. After killing the demons the place where the lord washed his cakra is said to become *cakratirtham*, a dip in which is believed to wash away all the sins.

Another legend runs thus: Once upon a time this place Antarvedi became a jungle and the location of Narasimha shrine was lost. A cowherd named Kesavadas who was grazing his cattle nearby found that one of his cow was returning home daily with empty udder. He then secretly followed the cow and found that the cow was emptying all its milk on an ant hill. Being surprised at the incident he saw a dream in which, the Lord Narasimha informed him that he is residing in the ant hill and asked him to build a temple on the same spot. Accordingly Kesavadas with the help of the locals constructed a temple there. The village, where Kesavadas lived was named after him as 'Kesavadasupalem'. After sometime the temple fell into ruins, but was rebuilt under the patronage of Sri Narendra Lakshmi Narasimha Rao as an offering to the Lord for protecting his ships from going down at sea. He purchased timber from Bhadrachalam and all the logs purchased for temple construction were marked with the Lord's name. But transportation could not take place due to the low water level of

Godavari and unfit for the running boats. Then Narasimha Rao was perturbed and thought that the Lord could not be kind enough to help even for the construction of his own temple. Surprisingly, with the heavy rain on that very night, there was heavy flow of the river and all the logs earmarked for construction of the temple automatically reached the Gantaghat of Antarvedi and the temple was constructed.<sup>38</sup>

*Kalyanotsavam* of the Lord is celebrated at this place on the *Bhishma Ekadasi* day during January / February. In *Phalguna*, the lord's chariot procession will take place. All other Hindu festivals are celebrated as usual.

### **11) Singarayakonda:**

Singarayakonda is in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh on Madras – Vijayawada main railway line. A famous Varahanarasimha temple is located on a hill and is known as '*Dakshina Simhacalam*' as its presiding deity is Varahanarasimha like in Simhacalam. It was built by the King Devaraya of Vijayanagar Empire in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and was modified with a beautiful gopuram by his successor, who is none other than Sri Krishnadevaraya. In the same premises, we find Yoganandanarasimha in a beautiful yoga posture. It is believed that this town got the name Singarayakonda (hill of lion king) because of this very temple. There is other the temple of Prassananjaneya, who is said to be in a peaceful form in standing posture and protecting the Lord. On either side of the main idol, there are two small shrines one for goddess Rajyalaksmi and another for goddess Andal. It is believed that Narada had performed penance and got the darshan of the Lord and he himself established this temple on the seashore. It is said that Indra was responsible for the construction of a sacred tank, now known by the

<sup>38</sup> Nrsimha Dev Temples in AP Survey by Sun Staff 'Antarvedi' available at [www.harekrishna.com](http://www.harekrishna.com)

name Bhavanasini, It is said that Rama visited Agatsya's hermitage, when Sita was taken away by Ravana and on the advice of Narada, Lord Rama established a temple for Lord Bhu-Varaha here.

A local story reveals why the Lord is called here as *Tata* (grand father) by local people affectionately. The members of Parnasala family, who were the poets of Royal Court used to visit Singarayakonda and worship the Lord regularly. On one such occasion, a small boy of that family stranded away from other members. On searching they found the boy on the next day morning in front of the temple and asked how he could spend the whole night alone in such a strange place. The boy told them that he spent the whole night under the protection of '*tata*' (grand father). Then the members could guess that the '*tata*' was none other than the Lord himself. From then onwards the local people used to call the Lord here as '*Tata*'

Another story says that when the sea was very rough, a ship was caught in the tides and tossed away violently. Then the sailors found the temple tower on the hillock and prayed for the assistance of the Lord for safe reach of the coast and promised to pay the requisite homage to the lord, if the ship reaches the coast safely. Surprisingly the ship without any damage reached the coast. The sailors paid the money to the temple as they promised. Since this was an amount to be paid perpetuity, the East India Company paid this money on their behalf for several subsequent years. Abiding by the tradition, the Govt. of India also is remitting the amount unfailingly every year in the month of *Jyesta* till now<sup>39</sup>.

There is a tunnel like opening behind the sanctum sanctorum of the Lord, which is believed to lead to the shrine of Lord Narsimha of Malakonda hill, which is also in the same taluk. All Hindu festivals will be celebrated with special emphasis on *Kalyanotsavam*.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd.) Sri Narasimha Avatara p. 77

## **12) Malakonda:**

Sri Lakshminarasimha is the presiding deity of this temple at Malakonda which is also called Malyadri. We find Sri Jvala Narasimha and Goddess Mahalaksmi temples here. Malyadri means garland of hills. This place is called so because to the west of this hill is Ahobilam; northwest Srisailem; south, Vrcchacala; east, Singarayakonda and north, river Krishna and thus it is surrounded by a row of hills.

The local legend states that this holy shrine was established by Lord Vishnu himself at the behest of Goddess Lakshmidēvi for the benefit of devotees and Vanamala was ordained by Vishnu, transformed himself into Malyadri (hill).

## **13) Korukonda:**

Korukonda is about 20 kms from Rajahmundry, East Godavari District and is popular for Lord Narasimha's shrine. There are two temples of Narasimha here, one on the top of a large hill adjacent to this village and another at the foot of the hill. The devotees have to ascend nearly 650 steps to have the darshan of Lakshmi Narasimha on the hill top. The presiding deity of both the temples is Lakshminarasimha only. This place is also as called *Parasaragiri*, *Parijatagiri*, *Suvamagiri* and *Konagiri* and the deity is known as '*Satvikanarasimha*' as he is accompanied by his consort, Goddess Lakshmidēvi in both the temples. The deity on the hill is about nine feet in height.

According to the mythology Lord Narasimha was worshipped here by sage Parasara, the grand son of Vasista. He had obtained all branches of knowledge through the recitation of the Narasimha Moola Mantra. As this place was suitable for meditation, he performed penance and prayed the Lord Narasimha to manifest on the hill. The

Lord agreed to reside over the hill and hence it is also called Parasaragiri.

It is believed that Pandavas have worshipped this deity on the advice of Vyasa. Subsequently the temple seems to have fallen in to disuse and it is Laksmi Dasi, to whom the Lord instructed in a dream to construct a temple on this hill. It was duly consecrated in around 1350 AD<sup>40</sup>. An inscription of 1443 A.D. found at Laksmaneswaram Village, Narsapur Taluk, and West Godavari District makes a reference to this temple. The Reddy kings ruled their territory Korukonda as their capital during its glittering period. Mummudi Nayaka of Reddy dynasty became Vaishnava follower and invited Parasara Bhatta, a great scholar from Srirangam to Korukonda.

In the temple at the foot of the hill, Lord Laksminarasimha is endowed with four hands and has the Goddess Lakshmidēvi beside.

#### **14) Agiripalli / Akiripalli:**

Agiripalli or Akiripalli is in Nuzvid Taluk of Krishna District at a distance of 30 kms from Vijayawada and an important *Kshetra* of Lord Narasimha. The Lord here is known as Sobhanacalaswami. It is believed that kiri (boar), one of the incarnations of Vishnu, dug a tank here, which is known as Varaha Puskarini. It is said that this hillock was known as Kalyanadri in Kritayuga, Sobhacala in Tretayuga, Svapnasila in Dwaparayuga and Sobhanadri in Kaliyuga. As in Simhacalam, the presiding deity is in the form of Varahanarasimha. This shrine is considered as '*Daksina Simhacalam*'. There are two temples one at the top of the hill and the other at the foot of the hill.



The *Sthalapurana* of this place is said to be part of Brahmandapurana. According to it there was a king by name Subhavrata of *Chandravamsa* who has renunciated everything and meditated on Narasimhamantra initiated by the sage Sanatkumar. The Lord manifested in the form of Laksmīnarasimha at the request of the king Subhavrata<sup>41</sup>.

Another story says that two persons Acyuta Bhatta and Ananta Bhatta have performed penance and both of them had a dream in which they were directed to find out his shrine nearby and arrange proper worship. On search both of them found out the image on this hill and a holy pond called *Varahapuskarini* and arranged proper worship there.

There is yet another story relating to the origin of this temple. In a nearby village called Veeravalli, there was a Vaishnavite by name Gopayyacharyulu. The Lord Narasimha in a dream, directed Gopayyacharyulu to locate his image in a near by hill and renovate the temple, which had fallen disuse. While searching, a tiger led him to a cave and Gopayyacharyulu boldly entered the cave and found the idol there. Gopayyacharyulu being old entrusted the worship to his son Subhannacharyulu, who became a very great scholar by the grace of the lord. One of his poetic works is *Sobhannachalasatakam*. Once he approached the Nawab of Hyderabad for funds towards the renovation of the temple. The Nawab, who was arrogant asked Subhannacharyulu to show the God. Subhannacharyulu duly agreed and asked them to keep ready for this challenge and butter mixed with sugar to offer the Lord. When Subhannacharyulu prayed the God to take it as Naivedya, surprisingly the Lord Vyaghranarasimha appeared in the form of a tiger and took the butter from the hands of Subhannacharyulu. The Nawab

<sup>41</sup> Ibid p78

wondered and granted Agiripalli village as an endowment in favour of the temple.<sup>42</sup>

In the temple, at the foot hill, there are separate shrines for Goddess Rajyalaksmi, Goddess Andal and also for *Yoganandanarasimha*.

### 15) Kadiri:

Kadiri, the original name of which was Khadri is situated about 90 kms from Anantapur, the District Head Quarters. There are two Narasimha temples, one in the town and the second is on a nearby hill. In the temple on the hill only the footprints of the Lord can be found, which is called as Narasimhapadam. There are images of seven divine sages on the hill. The temple in the town is with very lofty rajagopurams on all directions and spacious premises.

There are two images in the sanctum sanctorum one having eight hands (*ashtabahu*) and is in the posture of cleansing Hiranyakasipu, while Prahlada is standing besides him. This particular posture as Vidarananarasimha<sup>43</sup>(tear opening the stomach of the demon) as presiding deity of Narasimha Temple is unique in its nature here and rare we find this form of Narasimha as *Moolavirat* (main idol) and made Khadri Narasimha as a centre of attraction to the devotees of Narasimha and the second image in sanctum sanctorum is the Lord with Goddess popularly known as Lakshminarasimha.

The legend<sup>44</sup> states that the Lord who was in malignant form here after killing Hiranyakasipu at the request of gods headed by Brahma,

<sup>42</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd.) Sri Narasimha Avatara. P. 78-79.

<sup>43</sup> Vihagendrasamhita 4.17 of Pancaratra Agama enumerate 74 forms of Narasimha among them, Vidarana Narasimha is one. Based on arrangements of weapons in hands different postures and other suitable distinctions these forms are described.

<sup>44</sup> Nrisimhastotramalika compiled by A. Satyanarayana. Pp. 136-137.

having gone forward placed his foot on the near by hill and then manifested here again in benign form. It is believed that this place is khadri in olden times because of the abundant of khadri tree in this place so called as khadri. Yet another version explains that 'kha' means the foot of Vishnu and since there is the mark of foot of Vishnu on a hill, it is called as khadri. However, in due course, the name is corrupted and has become present kadiri.

#### **16) Pennahobilam:**

The Lakshminarasimha temple at Pennahobilam is located on the bank of rivulet Pennar. It is on the way from Anantapur to Uravakonda bus route and 36 K.M. from Anantapur.

According to local myth, this temple has been built on foot prints of the Lord Narasimha found on this bank of Pennar when he was wondering in his awful form after killing Hiranyakasipu.<sup>45</sup> There are sub shrines for Goddess Lakshmi and Chenchulakshmi. This temple is surrounded by very beautiful lush forest. This is a very ancient temple and the renovation work has been taken up recently.

#### **17) Tirumala:**

In the north east corner of the second precinct of the main temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, there is an exclusive shrine for Lord Yoganarasimha facing '*Vimanam*' of the presiding deity. It is said that Lord Narasimha appeared to Sankaracarya on the bank of Puskarini. A shrine is built there, but the Lord was without Goddess and was in 'ugra' form. Including Ramananjacarya felt that worship should not be done there and installed the idol in the second precincts of the temple in the north east corner of Prakara and directed the people to offer daily

offerings there for the idol. This is being followed since then. There I d another exclusive Lakshminarasimha temple on Tirumala hills beside the foot path.

## II) TAMIL NADU

Unlike in Andhra Pradesh, there are a few exclusive temples for Lord Narasimha in the Tamilnadu and others have only the sub-shrines in the main Vaishnava temples.

### 1) Sholinghur (Tirukkatikai):

The place is known by different names as Sholingapuram, Chola Singapuram and Ghatikacalam. It is called Chola Singapuram as this temple of Narasimha is located in Chola Territory. This got corrupted over a period of time as Sholinghur. Since a minute's time (*ghatika*) worship of the lord bestows liberation (*moksha*), this place is called '*Ghatikacalam*' and '*Tirukkatikai*'. This shrine is praised as one of the 108 *divyadesams* of Srivaisnavas by the Tamil Saint Tirumangai Alvar in his Periya Tirumozhi (8.9.4)<sup>46</sup>. Peyalvar and Nammalvar also praised the lord of Sholinghur. This holy place is situated 27 kms west of Tiruttani. There are two hillocks in the town one small and another big. On the bigger hillock, which may be reached by steps, there is a temple for the Lord *Yoganarasimha* who is seated facing east (Ap-II,p.3). On the smaller hillock there is a temple for *Yoga Anjaneya* with conch and disc in its hands. It is a rare of its kind facing west. This temple is famous for driving away the evil spirits.

The *Sthalapurana* says that after killing Hiranyakasipu, the Lord was still in "*ugrarupa*" and nobody could approach him. Finally at the prayers of Prahlada, he calmed down and agreed to manifest himself there to grace the devotees in *Santarupa* as "Yoganarasimha" along

<sup>46</sup> Dr.M.S.Rajajee IAS (Retd) Sri Narasimha Avatara , p. 81

with Amrithavallitayar. It is said that this temple was gold in *Krtayuga*; Silver in *Tretayuga*; Copper in *Dvaparayuga* and amidst rocks in *Kaliyuga*. The *sthalapurana* says that the Lord manifested himself on this in the *Kritayuga* on *Tritiyapada* of *Vaisakhasuklapaksa Caturdasi upari pournima tithi, Bhanuvasara svati Nakshatra* day.<sup>47</sup>

It is said that both the *Vishnupurana* and the *Padmapurana* speak about the greatness of this place and also said that Visvamitra became Brahmarsi by staying at this place for one "kadigai". According to the legend, the saptarsis, Atri, Vasista, Jamadagni, Gautama, Bharadvaja, Kasyapa and Visvamitra did penance here to have a vision of the Lord Narasimha. Then two demons Kala and Keya started to create hindrance to the penance of rishis. When the Lord in his incarnation of Rama, after killing Ravana wanted to return to his abode, Anjaneya also wanted to follow him. But Rama directed Anjaneya to stay back in this place to protect satparsis. When Anjaneya was unable to destroy them, the Lord gave him his sacred conch and holy discus to slay the demons as well as other demons. This legend vouchsafes the reason for Anjaneya holding the conch and the discus in his hands.

There is a small window opposite Lord Narasimha's Shrine at bigger hill through which the Lord is believed to give darshan to Yoga Anjaneya at Smaller hill. Lord Narasimha facing east and Lord Anjaneya facing west here are as evidence to this.

Swamy Doddachar, nephew of Saint Ramanuja was *sthanacharya* and had developed this shrine with the help of kings of Vijaynagar Empire in 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The Adi Kesava perumal Sannidhi of the town temple is also a sacred one. Pandava tirtham, Brahma tirtham, Sanjeevini tirtham and Narasimha tirtham are located in this place.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid P. 81

There are many inscriptions of 14<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>48</sup> found on the walls of the shrine.

## 2) Nammakal:

Nammakal is about 50 kms from Salem on Salem-Thirichirpally Road. This place is famous for rock cut sculptures of Lord Narasimha (Ap-II,p.3). Goddess Namagiritayar (who is a varaprasadi) and Lord Anjaneya which is about 25 feet high and facing Lord Narasimha here also like in Sholinghur, across the road. Lord Anjaneya is believed to be a very powerful deity.

The Mythology is that after Hiranyakasipu was killed, Lord Narasimha was still in a ferocious form and none could dare to approach him. Finally yielding to the prayers of his devotee Prahlada, he became cool down and assured to stay in his kingdom but in the form of a *salagrama*.

In the next Yuga, Hanuman set out to Himalayas in search of Sanjeevani herb to revive Lakshmana, who fainted in the battle field. After the purpose was served, Hanuman flew back to Himalayas to replant the hill he had pulled out earlier. He found a *salagrama* there and carried it with him. On his return by the time he reached Nammakal, it was sunrise and Hanuman descended there and placed *salagrama* on the ground to perform his morning offerings. After offerings, he tried to take *salagrama* back, but could not lift it. It had grown into an enormous mountain and the Lord in divine voice said that he wanted to stay there only along with Goddess Lakshmi on whom he conferred so many boons and hence came to be known as Namagiri Lakshmi (great Varaprasadi). The Lord directed Hanuman to proceed to Lanka and

<sup>48</sup> Web site of Devasthanam at [www.sholinghurnarasimha.com](http://www.sholinghurnarasimha.com) / Temple History

serve Lord Rama and permitted him to return to Nammakal and worship him from across the place after the end of that Yuga. <sup>49</sup>

The sanctum sanctorum is a cave and the main idol is that of Lord Narasimha. Sanaka, Sananda, Surya and Chandra are holding "Chamaras" (Chowries) and fanning the Lord. Along side Brahma and Siva are praying the Lord. Due to these Phenomena, this place is also called "*trimurtisthalam*"

In the panels of the Mandapa, on one side there are beautiful sculptures of Sri Vaikuntanarayana with Surya, Chandra, Siva, Brahma, Sage Markandeya, Bhudevi and Abhaya Narasimha and on the other side there is Ugra Narasimha, who is ripping open the chest of Hiranyakasipu using his nails. On the other side of the wall, an engraved depiction of Lord Trivikrama measuring the worlds with three steps and of Lord Varahamurti holding the Vedas and Bhudevi are seen. There is a separate shrine for the Goddess Namagiritayar and Lord Ranganatha in a cave, which is a protected monument.

The inscriptions refer to Gunashela of the Adhiyas as the builder of these shrines in 748 AD. <sup>50</sup>

### 3) PARIKKAL:

This Lakshminarasimha shrine is yet another exclusive shrine for the Lord at Parikkal. Three kilometers from a gigantic statue of Sri Anjaneya standing on the Madapattu-gedilam joint road on the Villipuram, Trichy Road, is a famous Svayambhu Laksminarasimha *Kshetra*. The Goddess is seated on the left thigh of the Lord and has her right hand wrapped around the Lord and similarly the left hand of

<sup>49</sup> Dr. M.S. Rajajee IAS (Retd) Sri Narasimha Avatara PP 81-82

<sup>50</sup> An article 'Rock Shrines at Namakkal' by K.Vernkatarari, story feature in the Hindu, dt.01.11.2002.

the Lord is wrapped around the Goddess. It is stated that since the Goddess embraced him to pacify the ferocious Narasimha, this place is called Parikkal. In the inner prakara, there is a shrine for Kanakavalli Tayar. There are separate shrines for Bhakta Anjaneya, Veera Anjaneya adjacent to Tayar Sannidhi. There are also sub shrines for Lord Varadaraja, Garuda, Varasiddivinayaka and Panchanathamurtis in these temples.

The *Sthalapurana* states that the Lord killed a demon by name Parasura, who attempted to slay the King Vasantaraja with an axe, when the latter was performing a *Yajna* to propitiate his family deity Narasimha. Due to the killing of a demon Parasura by Narasimha in *Ugrarupa*, the place came to be known as Parikkal. On the request of King Vasantaraja, it is believed that Narasimha stayed there with his consort. Visvakarma, the celestial sculptor is said to be the architect of the idol of the Lord and Sage Vamadeva consecrated the idol in the temple.

Yet another story about this place is that the Lord appeared to a devout dumb boy of that place in a dream and ordered him to unearth an ant-hill, where he had been for several hundreds of years. Accordingly, the boy with the help of the villagers found the idol of Narasimha in an ant-hill along with a *salagrama* of Narasimha and of the idol of Anjaneya. On seeing the idols, miraculously the boy got back his power of speaking. The villagers constructed a temple and consecrated it.<sup>51</sup>The temple had only *Moolavirat* and the *Utsavavighras* were arranged by the descendant of Madhvacarya on a command of the Lord in a dream.



There is a well inside the temple known as '*Nagakupam*' and it is believed that a bath in its water cures many ailments. There are *Garuda* and *Gomukhi tirthas*. This shrine is thronged by the people affected with '*Navagrahadosha*' and they believe that by lighting lamps with ghee or oil their *doshas* could be washed out.

#### **4) Pazhaiya Seevaram (Sripuram):**

Pazhaiya Seevaram or Sripuram, a lovely village with the temple for Lord Narasimha atop a small hillock is about 15 kms east of Kanchipuram on road to Chengalpattu. The main idol of Sri Lakshminarasimha in the sanctum sanctorum is very huge in size measuring nearly six feet. The lord is facing west and has the goddess seated on his lap. It is full of charm.

This place is marked by the confluence of three rivers viz., Palar, cheyyar and vegavathi and the three rivers can be seen merging together at a place from the temple on the hillock known as '*Daksina Prayag*'. It is believed that this is much holier than the Triveni Sangama of North (Prayag), because in Prayaga though it is the confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati, the last one can not be seen (antarvarhini), where as here, we can see the confluence of all the three rivers.

It is believed that this hillock was known as Padmagiri in times of yore. The *Brahmandapurana* mentions that the Lord Narasimha came to this Padmagiri to bless the sages Atri, Markandeya and Bhrgu, who were doing penance on this hillock. It is also believed that this is the place where the Lord Narasimha was pacified after killing Hiranyakasipu by the Goddess Sri Lakshmi and hence this place came to be called '*Sripuram*' which in due course changed to Seevaram. However it is still

unknown why and how it got the present name 'Pazhaiya' as prefix to Seevaram.

The temple must have had been in existence long before Chola period as inscriptions belonging to the 11<sup>th</sup> century are found here<sup>52</sup>.

It is said that the *Moolavirat* (the principle idol) of Lord Varadaraja at Kanchipuram was sculptured out of the rock of this hill , after the original image of atthi Varadar got damaged hundreds of years ago. It is said to mark this, Lord Varadaraja is taken to Pazhaiya Seevaram on the following day of Sankranti every year. This 'Parivettam' of Lord Varadaraja to this temple had given a fillip to this shrine besides its antiquity.

Lord Varadaraja will be carried in a procession from Kanchipuram accompanied by priests reciting the Pasurams and the Vedas and after reaching this place it is taken round the hillock. He then ascends the 140 steps and halts at the *mandapam* of Narasimha temple known as Varadaraja mandapam. From there, accompanied by Lord Narasimha he crosses river Palar and goes to Srinivasa Temple there (called Appan Temple) on the other side of the river. Three lords give 'Darshan' from there to the devotees. Later Lord Varadaraja returns to Pazhaiya Seevaram along with Lord Narasimha and then return back to Kanchipuram every year as a part of his Parivettam. Parivettai is observed to mark the destruction of evil forces by the Lord in most of the Vishnu temples.

There is a separate shrine for the Goddess knownas Ahobalavalli (as in Ahobalam of A.P.) and there are sub shrines for Andal, Alvars and Desikar.

Ibid. P. 93.

## 5) Singaperumal Koil:

Singaperumal Koil, which is otherwise called Padaladrinarasimha Perumal koil (the original name), is about 45 kms to the south of Chennai. The main idol is Ugra Narasimha and the fairly large idol is carved out of a single red coloured boulder (Ap-II,p.5). The lord is stained with the blood of the demon Hiranyakasipu and is therefore called Padaladri Narasimha and the idol is almost eight feet tall with a red face. The Lord is in a cave on the top a small hillock and the lord is carved from a rock within the cave.

The legend is that at the time of the incarnation of the Lord Narasimha there was a huge forest at this place and the sage Jabali, who was doing penance here, prayed the Lord to manifest in the same form as that of the form in which the demon king was killed. The lord granted the boon. The Lord is depicted here in a sitting posture with four hands, with the upper two hands holding the conch and discus, one of the lower hands is in abhayamudra and the other rests on his lap. The right leg is folded and kept on the left leg. Though the presiding deity is Padaladri Narasimha, the utsavagraha is prahladavarada (as at lower Ahobalam). The Goddess is present on the chest of the Lord and the lord is adorned with a salagrama garland<sup>53</sup>. A unique feature is that the Lord possess third eye and the priest lifts Namam (religious mark on forehead) to show the devotees while giving *Arti*. There is a separate shrine for Goddess called Ahobalavallitayar. Here two separate shrines are there for Andal and Alvars.

This temple is believed to be 1500 years old and Mudaliandan, the chief disciple of Saint Ramanuja lived here. There is a tank called Sudha Puskarini and a Parijata tree as a holy tree.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid p. 89.

## 6) Yanai Malai:

There are not many temples in South Tamil Nadu exclusively dedicated to Lord Narasimha though he is worshipped in sub shrines in many famous Vaisnavite temples. However, there is one temple dedicated to Lord Narasimha in that part in the cave temple at Yanai Malai eight kilometers from Madurai on the road to Melur. This place though not counted in the list of 108 *divyadesams*, is situated in between two *divyadesams* (holy places) i.e. Azhagarkoil in the north and Thirumohur in the east. This temple village is called Narasingam, as the adjoining hill is seen in the shape of an elephant and it is known as Yanai Malai. Lord *Yoganarasimha* is the presiding deity and it was built by Maran Kari, a minister of Pandya King Jatila Varman known as Komaran Sadaiyan.

The *Sthalapurana* says that the sage Romasa installed the idol in this cave. He did penance on the bank of *Padmatatakam* (Lotus Tank) near *Gajagiri kshetram* (presently Yanai Malai) seeking progeny and wanted the Lord in Narasimha form. The Lord appeared as Ugranarasimha and even celestials could not bear the heat that was emanating from the Lord. Prahlada, who was called to pacify could succeed only to some extent. When Goddess Laksmi arrived in the form of Narasingavalli, the Lord Narasimha could be pacified fully and had taken the form of Yoganarasimha and blessed the sage by granting the wished boon.

Another myth connected to this place is that the Lord Siva after taking bath in the tank known as *cakratirtham* could be relieved of his brahmahatyadosha committed by cutting off the fifth head of Brahma. This *cakratirtha* situated here is said to be capable of clearing of all the sins.

The other legend is that the Chola King, who could not win the battle against Pandya King of this area sought help of Jains and with their mystic power, an elephant was created to kill the Pandya King and to destroy his capital. Then the Pandya King, a devotee of Siva prayed Siva, who sent him 'Narasimhastram' which turned the elephant into a hill. Commemorating this event, a stone elephant was installed in Madurai which is found near Yanai Malai even today.

The inscriptions at this temple are written in ancient Tamil and Brahmi. There are two inscriptions of Sri Vallabha Pandya which speak of the gifts made to this temple. There are some other inscriptions of later Pandyas and one among them is of Sundara Pandya (1216 AD) but the inscriptions are incomplete.<sup>54</sup>

The Yoganarasimha idol in the temple is six feet high, sculptured on the hill itself. There are *Mahamandapam*, *Garudamandapam*, and *Mukhamandapam* of the Pandya period. The shrine of Goddess Narasingavalli faces south at the entrance. The temple is unique for its *utsava* idol of Narasimha in a standing posture with discus and conch in the upper two hands and in the left lower hand a mace, while the right lower hand is in Abhaya posture. Similar Narasimha idol is worshipped in Parikkal.

## **7) Narasimmam:**

This Narasimmam temple is situated just on the outskirts of Madurai and 10 kilometers away from it. The presiding deity is Yoganarasimha, seated in Yogapatti covering round the two ankles. The *utsava* idol is that of a standing Narasimha on a pedestal, which is rare of its kind.

<sup>54</sup> An article by T.A. Srinivasan, Yannai Malai , entertainment column, The Hindu, DT. Aug 22, 2003.

The myth connected to this place is that when the Goddess Meenakshi was attacked by *asuras* taking three forms, the Goddess could not eradicate only two forms, but the third form which is that of a huge elephant, she could not vanquish being a young maiden. Then she took the help of Lord Vishnu her brother. Since the lion is the natural enemy of elephant, Vishnu manifested in Narasimha form and overpowered the elephant. The lord then settled there as Yoganarasimha. The idol is very attractive and beautiful.<sup>55</sup>

### **8) Kandi Rajupalem:**

This place is about 5 kms to Thanjavur and Lord Narasimha is seen here as Yoganarasimha (Ap-II,p.4).

The local legend connected to this temple is that there was a staunch devotee, who used to circumbulate everything and anyone carrying 'namam' mark. The king of that place once wanted to fool him and sent two donkeys one having the mark of 'namam'. The devotee circumbulated the donkey with 'namam' mark leaving the other, the king asked him why he circumbulated only one and left the other, the devotee replied that the donkey with *namam* was representative of Vaishnava, whereas the other one was just like all of them including the king. The enraged king ordered his soldiers to execute him. But when he was being led for execution, the soldiers were caught fire miraculously. The king realized his fault and as a mark, he built this Narasimha temple here.

### **9) Denkanikota:**

Gavi Narasimha temple, located on the outskirts of Denkanikota in the Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu, is a unique temple. Located 70

kms from Bangalore and 27 kms from Hosur on a small hill, the sanctum sanctorum of this temple is underground in a subterranean cave below the level of the temple complex. The presiding deity Lakshmi Narasimha with his consort Goddess Lakshmi on his lap is nicely carved on the wall. The sanctum sanctorum is such tiny and low level place that only the priest can sit before the deity and no space for anyone else. The devotees have to descend nearly dozen steps from the entrance to have the dashing of the lord. The Unsaved murky is very beautifully made of panchaloha.<sup>56</sup>

#### 10) Velachery:

Velachery, originally known as Vedesreni is situated on the road from Saidapet to Tambaram in Chennai. The presiding deity of this temple is the Lord Yoganarasimha with four hands in a sitting posture facing the west. The Goddess Amritavalli is having a separate shrine. The *Utsava* idol is Sri Bhaktavatsala perumal with Sridevi and Bhudevi.

The place gets its name from Lord Vedanarayana perumal who is enshrined in the Manimandapa and is seen as standing west-faced and ready to discharge *cakra* to slay the evil doers. This place was called in ancient period as Vedanarayanapuram in Tamil and Vedasreni in Sanskrit. It is said Yogasanas used to be conducted here hence the name Vellvicheri (Vellvi means Yoga in Tami) and gradually corrupted as Velichery.<sup>57</sup>

#### 11) Perambakkam:

Sri Lakshminarasimha temple is located at Perambakkam at a distance of 55 kms to Chennai on the way to Sri Perambudur. The

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<sup>56</sup> [www.travelsulekha.com/gavi-Narasimha](http://www.travelsulekha.com/gavi-Narasimha) a unique temple, tamilnadu, travelogue-4421.

<sup>57</sup> T.A. Srinivasa, an article 'Abode of Lord Narasimha, published in Hindu, DT. 06.02.2003 available at [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

presiding deity is Lord Lashmi Narasimha along with Goddess Laksmi on his lap. He is in a sitting posture and the idol is huge and gigantic at about seven feet height and the Goddess is five feet. Both the lord and goddess are so attractive. This Perambakkam is also called Narasingapuram.<sup>58</sup>

It is believed that whoever worships here continuously for eight swati nakshatrams, he/she would get relieved of all obstacles and prospers in all walks of life.

### 12) Thiruvellikkeni (Triplicane – Chennai):

Brindavankshetra in Chennai city is one of the 108 Divyadesams praised by Alvars. The presiding deity is Pardhasartahi perumal. Just behind the main shrine, there is a sub shrine for the Lord Narasimha facing west (Ap-II,p.3). Lord Narasimha is said to have appeared on the prayers of sages Atri and Jabali. The lord is seated in Yoga posture<sup>59</sup>. The saint Thirumangai Alvar had sung ten *pasurams* on this *kshetra* and one is dedicated to the shrine of Lord Yoganarasimha.<sup>60</sup>

While the main idol here is Yoganarasimha, the *utsavamurti* has one hand in 'ahvanamudra' (inviting) as if inviting Prahlada.

### 13) Thiruneermalai:

This Thiruneermalai is one of the 108 *divyadesams* and is about 5 kms from Pallavaram in the suburbs of Chennai. The four deities in this shrine are: Neervannan, Narasimha, Ranganatha and Trivikrama in four different postures standing, sitting, resting and walking respectively and represent the lords of four *kshetras*; Thirunaraiyur (standing), Thiruvalli-

<sup>58</sup> Source  
[www.pulivahanan.wetpoint.com/page/sri\\_laksmi\\_Narasimha\\_temple\\_perambakkam](http://www.pulivahanan.wetpoint.com/page/sri_laksmi_Narasimha_temple_perambakkam)

<sup>59</sup> Dr.M.S.Rajjee IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara p82.

<sup>60</sup> Thiru Mangai Alvar ,Periya Tirumozhi 2.3.8 9(cf Dr. M.S.Rajajee, Sri Narasimha Avatara)



Thirunagari (sitting), Thirukkudandai (resting) and Thirukkovalur (walking/striding) at one place. Lord Narasimha has a separate shrine in this prakara and is in *yoga* posture as Yoganarasimha. Thirumangai Alvar has sung 10 *pasurams* in his Periya Thirumozhi of this *kshetra* and four *pasurams* refer to Lord Narasimha.<sup>61</sup>

#### 14) Thiruvali and Thirunagari:

These two are two *divyadesams* separated by about 3 kms. They are about 10 kms away from Sirkazhi. The main deity in Thiruvali is Lord Manavalan, whereas in Thirunagari, it is Lord Soundraraja Perumal. There are separate shrines for the Lord Narasimha just behind the main shrine. At Thiruvali, we find two Narasimhas in two different postures viz., Vidarananarasimha that is the Lord actually tearing open the demon king (as found in Kadiri of A.P) and Yoganarasimha (immediately after killing the demon king). In Thirunagari, Lord Narasimha is depicted with eight hands (*ashtabhuj*). Thus in these two *kshetras*, the lord is seen performing both the duties of punishing the wicked and protecting the pious. Though Manavala Muni, Thirumangai Alvar and Kulasekhara Alvar praised these two *kshetras* in their *pasurams*, none of them are on Lord Narasimha. These two Narasimhas are part of Pancanarasimha *kshetras* in a group of the Narasimha temples in Tamil Nadu, the other two being Kuraiyaloor, where the Lord is seen as Ugranarasimha and Thirumangaimadam, wherein the Lord is Veernarasimha.<sup>62</sup>

#### 15) Thirukoshtiyoor:

This Thirukoshtiyoor is the birth place of Thirukostiyoor Nambi (Koshtipoornar), who initiated the sacred mantra to Ramanuja and one

<sup>61</sup> Thirumangai Alvar, Periya Thirumozhi . 2.4.1; 2.4.4; 2.4.7 and 6.8.4 (cf. Dr. M.S. Rajajee, IAS, (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara p. 83.)

<sup>62</sup> Dr. MS Rajajee, IAS (Rtd) Sri Narasimha Avatara, pp 86-87.

of the Acharyas of Ramanuja. The main temple is in four tiers. Just outside the main temple, in the outer *prakara*, there are two slightly mutilated Narasimha idols (Ap-II,p.4). It is said that the idols were there inside the main temple in the beginning and due to the luster of the Lord, the people brought them outside. One of the idols is carved as chasing the demon king, who is trying to evade and the other is that the Lord is tearing open the abdomen of the demon king. This is one of the 108 *divyadesams*, but lord Narasimha had no share in the *pasurams* of Alvars.<sup>63</sup>

#### 16) Thanjaiyali Koil (Thanjore):

This is one of the 108 *divyadesams*. There are three temples within a radius of five kilometers of North of Thanjore, (1) Thanjaimamani Koil; (2) Thanjaiyayil Koil and (3) Maikundra Perumal Koil. At Thanjaiyayil Koil, the presiding deity is Narasimha, while in other two temples Neelamegha Perumal and Manikundra Perumal are the deities. However the *Utsavavighraha* is Srimannarayana in all the temples. In Thanjaiyayil Koil, the lord is in Yoga posture and hence is Yoganarasimha. It is said that lord Narasimha manifested before the Sage Markandeya at his request.<sup>64</sup> Thirumangai Alvar sung on this shrine<sup>65</sup> and also Bhoothathalvar in second Andadi.<sup>66</sup>

#### 17) Kattu Azhagiya Singar (Srirangam):

Srirangam a very holy place for Vaishnava tradition and is regarded as one of the 108 *divyadesam*. It contains the Lord Narasimha embracing Goddess Mahalaksmi in one of the walls of the *mandapam* (Ap-II,p.5) and no special shrine is found for Lord Narasimha. However the posture of the Lord embracing Goddess is a noteworthy one and hence it is touched.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid p. 86.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid p 82

<sup>65</sup> Thirumangai Alvar, Periya Thirumozhi 7-3-9 (cf Dr.Rajajee, Sri Narasimha Avatara)

<sup>66</sup> Bhoothathalvar 2.70 ( cf Dr.M.S.Rajajee,Sri Narasimha Avatara)

## 18) Thirumoghur:

Enroute to Melur from Madurai at about 12 kms, we find Thirumoghur, one of 108 *divyadesams* and also known as Mohanapuram. The presiding deity is Kalamegha Perumal, who manifested there at the request of the gods when he was in Mohinirupa to distribute *Amruta* (nectar). There is a separate shrine for sixteen handed Sudarshana and on the reverse of which is found the four handed Yoga Narasimha (Ap-II,p.5), who is believed to be powerful deity<sup>67</sup> (while discussing Mangalagiri *Kshetra* of A.P. supra, we find Narasimha entering into discus to kill *Asura*). It is believed that Lord Narasimha resides in Sri Sudarshana Cakra and even today we find Sudarshana homam being conducted at Narasimha temples in particular. Nammalvar in his Thiruvaimozhi sung on this shrine but not directly either on Lord Narasimha or on his characteristics.

## 19) Thirukkadanmalai (Mahabalipuram):

This place is 45 kms from south Chennai and on the sea coast and the presiding deity is Sthalaayana Perumal. There is a separate shrine for Lord Narasimha in the outer Prakara. Lord Narasimha is seen here as Yoganarasimha with four hands. Thirumangai Alvar sung 20 pasurams and in one pasuram, we get the reference to Lord Narasimha<sup>68</sup>

### III) KARNATAKA

#### 1) Melkote:

Melkote is located at about 55 kms North from Mysore in Karnataka and is famous for an ancient temple for Lord Tirunarayana. It is one of the 108 *divyadesams* of vaishnavas and known for its long

<sup>67</sup> Dr. MS Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara p. 90-91.

<sup>68</sup> Thirumangai Alvar, Periya Thirumozhi 2.5-10.

association with the great saint of Vaisnavite tradition Ramanujacharya. Melkote is also known as Yadavagiri, Yatistalam, Vedadri and Narayanadri. The presiding deity is known as Tirunarayana while *utsava* deity is Vishnu which goes by the names Selvapillai and Sampatkumara also.

Melkote has two distinct temples. The Tirunarayana temple is located at the foot-hills, while Yoganarasimha temple is on the top of the hill. The legend says that Yoganarasimha image was installed by none other than Prahlada himself.

The Yoganarasimha temple at the top of the hill is at a height of 1,777 meters above sea level. The majestic gopuram of the temple is visible from a distance. This temple is believed to be one of the seven holy centers of Narasimha worship.<sup>69</sup> The Lord's form at the Narasimha temple in Melkote is *Ugra* Narasimha and is really frightening. According to a few Vaishnava scholars, there are nine Narasimha temples in this area like Saligramam, Thondanur, Padmagiri, Srirangapatnam, Sivasamudram, etc.

Saint Ramanujacharya of 12<sup>th</sup> century lived in this place for about 14 years to avoid Chola King, who prosecuted Vaishnavites. The Saint stayed at Tondanur Narasimha temple for some time before proceeding to Melkote. These two temples existed even before the visit of the Saint. It is said that the King Bhattideva of Karnataka, embraced Sri Vaishnava way of life being inspired by the Saint Ramanujacharya, while the later was in Melkote and assumed a new name Vishnuvardhana. He built five Narayana temples and renovated the two temples of Melkote when they were in ruins. These temples have been under the patronage of the Mysore Royal family and are endowed with valuable jewelry presented to the Lords of this place.

The special feature of this place is that a cave known as '*pulikugai*' and also as '*piladvaram*', through which one has to crawl with great difficulty, is located around just below the idol of Lord Narasimha. Just passing through this is a divine experience indeed. The cave was kept closed in the past and has been reopened now.<sup>70</sup>

## 2) Hampi:

Hampi is famous for a gigantic monolith of Ugranarasimha carved out of a single boulder (Ap-II,p.7). According to the inscription found here, it was executed in 1525 AD during the rule of Sri Krishnadevaraya, whose tutelary deity is Lord Narasimha with a view to construct temple, but could not be completed. This image is of 6.7 meters height and was mutilated to an extent and the image of Lakshmi carved as sitting on the lord's left thigh was entirely damaged and missing from this place when the place was vandalized in 1528 AD by the invaders. With the well delineated mane, large bulging eyes and with broad chest, the Lord Narasimha is seen here as most awesome and the centre of attraction for the tourists.

Lord Narasimha is seated on the coils of Adishesha and covered above his head with the seven hoods of Adishesha, which act as a canopy. The entire statue is covered with in an arch with lion-mask above the hoods of Adishesha. The image of goddess Lakshmi which is recovered later is preserved in Kamalapura Museum.<sup>71</sup>

## 3) Devarayanadurga:

Devarayanadurga is a rocky hill station situated at an altitude of 3940 feet near Tumkur and 68 kms from Bangalore on Bangalore- Pune road. There are three elevations and seven gates leading to the top.

<sup>70</sup> An article 'A great incarnation by T.A. Srinivasan, The Hindu, June, 07, 2007

<sup>71</sup> Sources. [www.hampionline.com/ugranarasimha](http://www.hampionline.com/ugranarasimha)

This place is originally known as Anebidasari and after it was captured by the Mysore King Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar it is named as Devarayanadurga.

The Lakshminarasimha temple is on the lowest elevation. Nearby there are two springs called as Anadone and Jayatirtha, which are the source of streams for Mangali and Jaya, which unite at the foothill as a source for river Shimsha. The most important temples of this place are Yoganarasimha, Bhoganarasimha and Laksminarasimha. The Laksminarasimha temple is at the lowest elevation built in Dravidian style of architecture facing east. It is said that this temple was constructed by Kantirava Narasaraj-I and later was repaired by the Mysore king Krishnaraja Wodeyar III according to the inscriptions. At the foot of the hill, we find Yoganarasimha and Bhoganarasimha temples.

We find yet another Narasimha temple on the third elevation and this temple consists of sanctum sanctorum, *mukhamadapa* and *Navagraha* shrine. There are Narasimha *Tirtha* and Prasara *Tirtha*. This temple is said to be older than Laksmi Narasimha temple on first elevation.<sup>72</sup>

*Rathotsava* is celebrated for Bhaganarasimha and Narsimha *Jayanti* is another festival which attracts the devotees to this place from all parts of Karnataka. The pilgrims feel that *giripradakshina* (circumbulating the hill) fulfills all wishes.

#### **4) Karpara Kshetra (Koppara):**

The koppara village wherein Karpara Srinarasimha is presiding deity is located on the banks of river Krishna is 90 kilometers from

Gulbarga in Karnataka. The specialty of this *kshetra* is that the Lord here is *Vriksharupi* (in the form of Pipal –Asvartha tree). However, all the prayers are offered in the usual manner. The belief that the Lord is abiding in an odd form is very deep and the place has become very popular. The presiding deity of this temple is Ugranarasimha. The pipal tree is adored as the Lord's form since it embodied several salagramas in its hollow from where Lord Narasimha appeared.

The myth of to this place says that the sage Karpara, a descendent of Sage *Bhrgu* did penance for lord Narasimha and got his blessings. It is believed that the Lords Brahma and Siva along with other gods descended to worship the lord in the form of water during Karkataka *Sankramana* every year.

An interesting story connected to pipal tree and a temple for Lord Venkateswara in this place is that the Lord Venkateswara ordered a devotee by name Narappayya in a dream to construct a temple and plant a pipal tree stating that the place would be dearer to him and he himself manifested in the form of an idol along with a asvartha sapling by his side. A temple was constructed and the popularity of this place grew along with the pipal tree.

In due course, the pipal tree grew older and started drying up. Branch after branch fell and finally the whole fell on the ground miraculously on the auspicious day of Narasimha Jayanti i.e. the thirteenth day of bright half (*suklapaksha*) of Vaisakha. To the astonishment of the world, several salagramas of different dimensions were found in the hollow of the trunk of the tree. One bigger one weighing nearly 5 kgs is identified as '*Ashtabhuja ugranarasimha salagrama*'. The locals installed the salagrama in a temple and a new pipal tree started to grow in the same place where the salagrama found.

A legend popular there is that the king Adil Shah of Bijapur under whose jurisdiction this Koppara Village is situated, being ordained by the Lord Venkateswara in his dream renovated the Lord Venkateswara Temple there and begot a legal heir by the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. Thus The Lord Narasimha gained more popularity as the presiding deity. The temple of Lord Venkateswara, which is instrumental for the popularity of Lord Narasimha and the papal tree from where the lord emerged, is also a place of interest for the pilgrims located adjacent to Narasimha temple.<sup>73</sup>

### **5) Kurunagera:**

Kurunagera village is situated just 4 kms from Dodda Mallur, Channapattana Taluk, of Karnataka. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Yoganarasimha stationed on a hillock.

The local legend connects the sage Kanva to this place. The great sage Kanva, while doing penance in Kurunagere found Narasimha bimbam in a pillar on a nearby hillock. At the same time, a settlement of nomads known as 'Kadugollas' came to dwell in that forest. They used to graze their cattle near the hillock and one cow used to pour out its milk automatically in a particular bush always. The sage Kanva observing this, determined that there must be the presence of the Lord and in disguise of one Kadugolla told the other Kadugollas about it. The Kadugollas cleared the bush, on the advice of Kanva found the image of Lord Narasimha in a pillar there.

As soon as Lord Narasimha's appearance, sage Kanva disappeared after making necessary arrangements for his worship. Then onwards the Kadugollas started business making the Lord as their business partner offering some of the portion of their profit to the Lord

<sup>73</sup> K.K. Murthy, the Devalayas of Karnataka, (Online Book) w.w.w.hindubooks.org/templesofindia /devalayas of Karnataka, Narasimha of karpara-ksetra.



and prospered. Even today it can be seen that on an annual congregation (Jathara), the descendents of those Kadugollas visit and pay their offerings to the lord.<sup>74</sup>

## 6) Tondanur / Tonnur:

Tondanur is situated in Mandya District, Srirangapatnam Taluk of Karnataka and 30 kms north from Mysore. The temple of Yoganarasimha is situated with Narasimha dandam (scepter) and the Goddess Yadavanayaki. It is believed that Prahlada himself installed the idol as in Melkote. It is said that the Vaishnava saint Ramanjacharya, after leaving his home Sirirangam when Chola King was persecuting Vaishnavas made this place as his home for some years before moving to Melkote. It is said that a historical lake Tonurkere spread over 2,150 acres was planned and built by saint Ramanjacarya and was named as '*Tirumalasagara*'. Later when Adil Shah invaded, it is renamed as 'Moti Talab' because of its crystal clear water. Again in due course, Tippu Sultan of Srirangapatnam repaired the lake. The outflow of water from the lake formed into a waterfall known as Ramanuja Ganga or Tonnur Madaga. Never in the history, this lake dried up at any time so far, it is said.

In and around, in addition to Yoga Narasimha temple three other ancient Hayasala architectural temples (1000 years or more) are located here. They are: 1) Venkataramana/ Srinivasa temple, 2) Nimbinarayana Temple, 3) Parthasarathi / Venugopal temple.

1) The Venkataramana temple is on a top of a rocky hill called Padmagiri and the worship is performed in this temple only on Saturdays. 2) The Nambinarayana / Lakshminarayana temple is said to be a Jain temple and Saint Ramanujacarya after the Jain king Battideva's

<sup>74</sup> An article by A.M. Rajagopalan, Astrologer and Editor, "Kumudham Jothidam", Tamil Astrological magazine.

conversion as Vaishnava and becoming the follower of Ramanujacarya installed the idol of Narayana in that Jain temple. The deity Lord Vishnu's idol is tall with *Sankha*, *cakra*, *gada* and *padma* in his four hands and the *utsava* idol is a replica of the main idol. The goddess there is Aravindavalli. 3) In Parthasarathi temple, the presiding deity is Lord Krishna with Bhudevi and Sridevi on either side. The goddess is Yadavanayaki. The *utsava* idol is Lord Krishna with Rukmini and Satyabhama. It is believed that Dhramaraja and Sage *Bhrigu* are believed to have installed the main idol.

As discussed earlier, the presiding deity of the temple is Yoganarasimha and the goddess is 'Yadavanayaki'. In this temple, a separate shrine is dedicated to saint Ramanujacarya in a preaching pose, where it is said that Ramanujacarya defeated 1000 Jain monks in a debate. All the defeated Jain monks embraced Sri Vaishnavism.<sup>75</sup>

## 7) Saligrama:

Saligrama is a temple town on the Mangalore-Mumbai National Highway, 22 kms from Udipi in Karnataka. Gurunarasimha is the presiding deity of Saligrama Temple and also family deity of many families of that village and nearby villages. The idol is about three feet high and is carved out in a single salagrama and hence the name Saligrama for this place.

It is believed that the idol was installed by Lokaditya King of Mourya dynasty around 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, under the leadership of Rajaguru Bhattacharya. Legend says that the Lord Narasimha appeared as Lord Ganesha in Bhattacharya's dream and asked to install Narasimha idol on Ganesh Yantra in this temple. Though the presiding deity of this temple is Narasimha, the rituals conducted here are similar

to that of Saiva tradition Moreover Lord Ganesha occupies a prominent place in the rituals.<sup>76</sup>

The resident Kota Brahmins of this place are neither Saivites nor Vaishnavites but consider Narasimha as their Guru and God. They do not have any other Guru, Swami or Math, because they consider Narasimha as their Guru. The deity is known as Guru Narasimha.

#### **8) Bidar:**

Bidar is a taluk and an important historical town in Karnataka. The Narasimha Zarna Cave temple is situated in the outskirts of Bidar. The temple is situated in a large cave under Manichola range of hills and about 1 km to city. This temple virtually runs into a cave water body, which is one of the unique features of the place. A perennial stream is said to be flowing continuously for hundreds of years. The water in the cave leads the pilgrims to the idol of Narasimha Jharna cave. One has to wade through the water of waist deep to have the darshan of the Lord Narasimha on the wall at the end of the cave. It will be a thrilling experience to move in the cave where the bats and owls sit on the roof of the cave, but it is said that they will not do any harm to the visiting devotees.<sup>77</sup>

#### **9) Srirangapatna:**

Narasimha temple of Haysala period is an ancient temple situated to the south east of the famous Ranganatha temple at Srirangapatnam. This temple houses a seven feet high image of Ugra Narasimha made of Black stone which is believed to be the best of its kind. Srirangapatnam is on the way to Mysore is about 16 kms away.

<sup>76</sup> Kootastha Veda Shastra Poshaka Sangha available at [www.kootastha.org](http://www.kootastha.org)

<sup>77</sup> [www.karnataka.com/Narasimha\\_zharna\\_cave\\_temple](http://www.karnataka.com/Narasimha_zharna_cave_temple)

## 10) Baburayan Koppal / Turuma Kudalu Narasimpur:

Baburayan Koppal, a small village near Srirangapatnam is situated on the banks of Cauvery and near the confluence of Lokapavani and Cauvery on the road from Bangalore to Mysore before Srirangapatnam. The presiding deity of the temple is Sri Manikarnika Gunja Sri Lakshmi Narasimha. The deity Narasimha has a small bead (*Rudraksha*) in his right palm (Bead is called Gulaganji in Kannada) to indicate the sacredness of this *Kshetra*.

The myth says that Sage Bhrgu did penance and Vishnu blessed him in the form of Sri Lakshminarasimha. The sage installed Lord Lakshmi Narasimha here, it is believed. The local legend is that the Lord appeared in a dream to a washer man, who used to wash his clothes at the bank of Cauvery and revealed that his idol was under the stone, where he was washing clothes everyday. He instructed the washer man to unearth it and to construct a temple and also arrange regular worship. He also informed him that there was a pot full of gold that can be used for its construction. Accordingly the washer man unearthed the idol and constructed a temple. Finding the bead in the right hand of the Lord, the lord and the place were considered as very pious. It is also said that when once the washer man wished to go to Kasi on pilgrimage, the Lord told in the dream that there is no need to go to Kasi and Prayag since he earned such merits by constructing this temple more sacred than that place.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the above temples of Lord Narasimha, it is found that, under the patronage of Haysala, Calukya and Vijayanagar dynasties, several temples of Lord Narasimha were constructed during 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Akkiheballu, Mandya Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Bagur,

Hassan Dist.; Sri Yoga Narasimha temple at Belagola, Mysore Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Hornahalli, Hassan Dist.; Sri Narasimha temple at Haveri; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Hole Narasimhapur, Hassan Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Javagal, Hassan Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Kunigal, Tumkur Dist.; Sri Narasimha temple at Maddur, Mandya Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Nuggehalli, Hassan Dist. etc. are some of very ancient temples and most of them are protected under ancient archeological sites also, but legends are not available.

### III) KERALA

#### 1) Anantha Narayanapuram, Alleppy:

This temple is situated at Ananthanarayanapuram (A N Puram) near T.D. Medical Hospital, just 500 meters from NH 47 highway. This is popularly known as New Tirumala temple, wherein presently the main Presiding deity is Sri Lakshmi Narasimha. Sanctum Sanctorum has three steps: on the top step in Sri Venkatachalapathy with Lakshmi Devi and Bhoodevi; on the next step Lord Narasimha with Mahalakshmi on the left lap and the Utsava deities on the next step. The idols of Hanuman, Garuda and Ganapati are together installed on a single platform in the sanctum sanctorum.

This temple is more known in relation to Cochin Venkatachalapathy idol case. During the Portuguese persecution at Cochin, the idols of Venkatachalapathy and Lakshmi of Cochin Gosripuram and Narasimha of Thuruvoor were shifted to Alleppy in 1792 AD and kept in the North Agrasala of Alleppy Venkatachalapathy (old Tirumala Temple) for more than 60 years. During that period Alleppey developed in trade and commerce and became an important sea port. After the governance of Cochin changed, the new king of

Cochin demanded back the idol of Venkatalapathy, but was denied by the king of Travancore under which jurisdiction Alleppy come under. The king of Travancore immediately constructed a temple in a new location for Venkatalapathy at about 1 kms to the Old Tirumala temple and the area was named as Ananthanarayanapuram. The idols of Venkatalapathy, Lakshmi Devi and Narasimha were installed in the new temple. However, within ten days of installation, the Venkatalapathy idol was clandestinely taken back to Cochin at midnight and the idol was moved beyond the Travancore state boundary by the time the news was spread and hence the shifting could not stopped . The original idols of Lakshmi and Narasimha are still in the temple. A new idol of Venkatalapathy was installed in later days. Along with eight days annual celebrations to Venkatalapathy, a five day annual celebration in connection with *Narasimhajayanti* was started in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A legend related to with the commencement of the five day annual celebrations of Lord Narasimha goes thus: Once after the daily ritual at the temple, payasam was distributed as naivedya and all the devotees consumed it. Later venomous snake was found in the vessel of payasam. All the devotees became panic stricken and the temple authorities requested all of them to stay back and a mass prayer was offered to Narasimha. Surprisingly, all escaped unharmed, except one who did not stay back and left the premises. He died of poison. It is said that after the event, the tip of a finger of Lord Narasimha's leg turned bluish as if the poison was absorbed by him. Then onwards the five day annual celebrations for Narasimha were made a regular feature.

It is said that due to the fierceful vision of Lord Narasimha, the area in front of the temple remained barren and no establishment could come up there. To avoid this, it is said that the position of the idol was

slightly tilted backwards to avoid the direct vision on the area and from then on the area had developed well.

Another legend is told that once a royal dignitary visited the temple late in the evening just before the closure. The flowers to offer the Lord were exhausted and to avoid the wrath of the royal dignitary, the priest took out some flowers already kept on his head (without the notice of the visitor) and offered it to the visitor. The royal dignitary finding hair in the flower asked the priest whether the lord has hair. The priest who was left with no option said yes and when asked to show, he said since it had become dark he would show it on the next day. The royal dignitary said he would visit again on the next day and the priest had to show him hair. The worried priest offered prayers throughout the night to Lord Narasimha and just when he slept in the early hours, the lord appeared in dream and told the priest not to worry and directed him to ask the royal dignitary to witness the idol with a single eye closing the other one. Accordingly when the royal dignitary viewed the lord with his single eye being unable to bear the divine brightness of the lord, he lost the vision of that eye permanently.<sup>79</sup>

## **2) Thuravoor:**

Thuravoor is 22 kms south of Cochin on NH 47 national highway to Alleppey. Thuravoor is an important community of Gowda Saraswat Brahmins (GSB). The pratisha is believed to have taken place in the year 1640 AD by Sri Raval Naickan and the present temple was constructed in 1704 AD. In the sanctum sanctorum, on the first step, there is the idol of Venkatacalapathy; on second step, Vishnu Padukam; and on the fourth the *Utsava* idol. The third step is vacant symbolizing

<sup>79</sup> Temple history posted by Konkani Ambalam Narasimha GSB Temple, Alleppey at [www.wikimedia.org/147854/lakshmi-narasimha-temple-anapuram-Alepuzha](http://www.wikimedia.org/147854/lakshmi-narasimha-temple-anapuram-Alepuzha).

the original Ugranarasimha idol, which is now at A N Puram temple, Alleppy.

It is said that one by name Raval Naickan, a young businessman and ardent devotee of Lord Narasimha settled in Thuravoor near Vadakkapan Temple and used to visit the temple and attend *deeparadhana* everyday evening from outside the temple, since GSBs were not allowed inside the temple on those days. One day the priests intentionally closed the temple early to deny the darshan and prasadam of the lord to Raval Naikan. The worried Raval prayed the lord from outside and heard a voice asking him to move westward. He followed a light moving towards west and when he reached the place of the present temple, the light disappeared. He heard as if he was instructed to do a pratishtha of the lord there. At the same time, he found two sculptors approaching him and requested them to make a Narasimha idol for him. They made an enclosure, having accepted and instructed him not to enter the enclosure till they complete the work. Raval Naickan waited for long and being unable to hear any sounds from within the enclosure, he entered and found two beautiful idols of Narasimha, one in Ugra form and the other in Lakshminarasimha form, but not the sculptors there. However, the idol of Ugranarasimha was with an unfinished toe. Raval Naickan believed that those sculptors were divine and constructed a small temple for Lord Narasimha and he himself looked after till he became old. Later he handed over the temple management to Cochin Tirumala Devosom in 1704 AD<sup>80</sup>. Originally the idol was facing west and later to avoid the powerful vision directly on the agricultural fields there the pratishtha was again made with the idol facing east.

<sup>80</sup> Source at [www.tdtemple.org/thuravoor](http://www.tdtemple.org/thuravoor)



As discussed earlier, during the persecution of Portuguese in Cochin, along with many Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins, the Ugranarasimha idol was also shifted to Alleppey. First it was in old Tirumala temple and later installed in New Tirumala Temple in Alleppy. Subsequently Thuravoor became part of Travancore state. After the idol of Venkatalapathy was clandestinely taken back by the King of Cochin, there was infighting among community members in Cochin and Travancore for the ownership of Thuravoor temple because of its rich properties. The Cochin members filed a case in Quilon Court in 1853 AD. For some time the temple was under a Receiver appointed by the Court. In 1895 AD, the Court decided that both Alleppey and Thuravoor temples belong to the entire community members of eight surrounding villages' viz., Alleppy, Thuravoor, Shertallai, Purakkad, Kayankulam, Quilon, Kottayam and Parur. Accordingly, Alleppey Anantanarayanapuram Thuravoor Tirumala Devasam (AATTD) was formed and managed by elected members of eight villages. The Devasam was very rich and established many educational institutions.

### **3) Vadakkanappan Temple:**

Another temple in Thuravoor is Vadakkannappan, which is the abode of Lord Ugranarasimha and Lord Sudarshana. Twin sanctum sanctorums and flag masts in this temple complex are the specialty of this temple. One sanctum sanctorum dedicated to Lord Sudarshana is believed to have come into existence first. Though no records are available, it is said to be 1300 years old. The second sanctum sanctorum dedicated to Lord Narasimha is said to come into being somewhere in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD during the reign of Chera King Keralendan.

The idol of Lord Sudarshana has four arms carrying conch, disc, mace and lotus. The idol of Narasimha is said to have originated from

the holy city of Kasi and unlike most other Narasimha idols, here Lord Narasimha is in a standing posture. The lord Narasimha on northern side is called Vadakkanappan and Lord Sudarshana on southern side is called Thekkanappan. On the extreme eastern side, in the direct vision of Narasimha shrine there is a massive tank and it is believed that this cool, clean and serene water of the tank has calming effect on the lord's fierce form<sup>81</sup>.

#### 4) Tellicherry:

Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple in the heart of Tellicherry town, Kannur District in the Northern parts of Kerala is an important centre for GSBs. It is just half a kilometer from the railway station as well as bus stand. The presiding deity of this temple is Sri Lakshmi Narasimha and the sanctum sanctorum has a three tier *simhasana*. On the top level Lord Lakshminarasimha is flanked by Sri Pattabhinarasimha and Veeravittala; on the second level Lord Kodandarama with Sita and Lakshmana; on the third level Lord Venkataramana with Sri Devi and Bhudevi and on either side Garuda and Hanuman. The *Utsava* idol is Lord Venkataramana. The *Salagramas* and the *Nagadevathas* are placed on a separate *pitha*.

In the outer prakara, there are separate shrines for Hanuman, Lakshmidēvi, Ganapathi and Vittoba Rukmini. On the south of the temple complex, the sacred temple tank exists.

It is said that GSBs who migrated from Goa built a small shrine for Lord Kodandarama here first. A legend connects the origin of Lakshmi Narasimha temple with his ardent devotee Devdas Bhandari. The legend in brief is as hereunder. One night Devadas Bhandari a rich and affluent GSB merchant was instructed by Lord Narsimha in the dream

<sup>81</sup> [www.tdtemple.org/thuravoor](http://www.tdtemple.org/thuravoor).

that one Namboodri would approach him with the divine idol of Lord Laksmi Narasimha and a sacred *Salagrama* and to accept them by offering generous gifts in return. On the same night that Namboodri, a native of Taliparamba, 50 kms to Tellicherry got similar dream instructing him to hand over the idol and *salagrama* to Bhandari at Tellicherry. Accordingly that Namboodri handed over the idol and *salagrama* to Bhandari and Bhandari presented gifts to him. Though Bhandari kept the idol and salagrama in his pooja room for sometime, later they are handed over to the king of Tellicherry by the Bhandari family. A proper temple was constructed in the place occupied by Lord Rama and the idols of Laksmi Narasimha, Lord Rama, and Lord Venkataramana along with their consorts were installed in the temple.<sup>82</sup>

#### **5) Shooranadu:**

Shoranadu is a Panchayat at Kottappuram stop of Kayankulam-Sastamkotta in Kollam District, Kerala. The presiding deity of the temple of this place is Sri Narasimha and is also called Anayadi Pazhayidan Narasimha temple. Anayadi literally means the footsteps of the elephant. The lord in this temple faces east and the deities of sub shrines are Siva, Bhuvaneshwari, Nagaraja and Nagayakshi.

A ten day long annual festival is celebrated here in Malayalam month of *Makara* (January-February). The concluding day is marked by an elephant pageantry in which 80 odd tusked take part. The procession has the traditional temple orchestras as accompaniment. This is a real visual treat.

## 6) Thiruvanthapuram/Trivandrum:

Sri Ananthapadmanabhaswamy temple at Thiruvantapuram (Trivandrum), capital city of Kerala is one of the famous 108 *divyadesams* praised by the Alvars. The presiding deity is Lord Ananthapadmanabhan (in sleeping posture facing east) and the Goddess Srilakshmitayar. Nammalvar praised this Lord in 11 pasurams, but none of them is on Narasimha. There are separate shrines for Yoganarasimha, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Varaha, Krishna and Srinivasa. The Lord Narasimha here is in Yoga posture and Lord Hanuman shrine is just opposite to this shrine. These deities are said to be very powerful. Matsya, Varaha and Padma *tirthas* are located here.<sup>83</sup>

## 7) Chengannur:

Sastamkulangara Narasimha temple is 500 meters east of Changannur Madhava temple in Kerala state near Pampa River. This very old temple has very beautiful wood carvings such as Gajendra Moksha Data, Dasavatara, Ananthasayana, Sivaparvathi, Hanuman, Seetha, Narasimha etc.<sup>84</sup>

## IV) ORISSA

The very mention of Orissa invariably leads us to the religious of City of Puri for its antiquity and rich architecture in general and Lord Jagannatha, presiding deity of the city itself in particular. No doubt the Jagannatha cult dominates the entire land of Orissa. Due to the inseparable association of Narasimha cult with Jagannatha cult, the Lord Narasimha enjoys much more reverence there. It is believed that there are more than a hundred Narasimha temples with rich endowments in the state Orissa. Some of these temples in around Puri

<sup>83</sup> Source [www.divyadesamonline.com/hindu/temples/kerala/thiruvanthapuram-temple](http://www.divyadesamonline.com/hindu/temples/kerala/thiruvanthapuram-temple).

<sup>84</sup> Source: [www.naturemagics.com/kerala-temples/sastamkulangara-Narasimha-temple](http://www.naturemagics.com/kerala-temples/sastamkulangara-Narasimha-temple).

starting with the Narasimha temple located in the very Jagannatha temple complex are being discussed here.

Lord Jagannath temple is the primary attraction in Puri. In this temple, the wooden images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra (brother of Jagannatha) and Goddess Subhadra (sister of Jagannath) are being worshipped. The construction of the temple was done by Raja Anantha Varman Chodagangadev. In this temple town, there are Narasimha temple, Gundicha Mandir, Siddha Mahaveer temple, Loknath temple, Markandeswara Temple, Indradhynana Tank Narender Sarovar, Parbati Sarovara, Rohini Kunda, Markandeswar Tank and Sweta Ganga Tank.

### **1) Narasimha Temple:**

The Narasimha temple is located in the southern side of the inner enclosure of the Jagannath temple complex of Puri. The temple is built in Sand Stones. The architectural style of the temple dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD and most probably to the Somavamsi period of Orissa history. It faces to east. Figures of ten incarnations are sculpted on the outer prakara. The images of Parsvadevatas Varaha, Ananthanarayana and Vamana are on southern, western and northern directions. The image of Laksmi Narasimha is finely carved on the upper door lintel.

The presiding deity of this temple is Lord Narasimha in a fierce form in the actual aspect of tearing open the demon king Hiranyakasipu in the sanctum sanctorum. He has four hands with conch and cakra in upper hands while the lower two hands are engaged in taking out the entrails of Hiranyakasipu.

As many as 61 inscriptions are found here referring to different events connected to this place in different languages viz., Oriya and Sanskrit and the earliest inscriptions are dated in Saka 1035 i.e., 1113 AD. Prof. KS Behera, Department of Ancient History of suggests that

this temple was already there in 1113 AD and it should be long to the Somavamsi period of Orissan history. The archeological design of Narasimha temple also indicates that this must have been constructed prior to Jagannath temple. Some historians feel that this Narasimha might have been in the temple of Purushottama before the present temple was constructed by Anantha Varman Chodagangadev and later was changed into Narasimha temple once the Purushottama idol was shifted to the new. But this view has not gained support from many scholars and even the Parsvadevatas of present Narasimha temple also indicate that this temple is originally Narasimha temple only from the beginning<sup>85</sup>.

## **2) Yagnanarasimha Temple:**

It is near Gundicha temple in Puri. There is a temple, the sanctum of which preserves a remarkable image of Lakshminarasimha. The deity was believed to be installed by Chodagangadeva, who introduced the system of Narasimha worship in Puri. The deity is seated in *yogasana* posture with legs crossed and tied near knees with four hands with conch and disc in upper hands, while lower hands rested over knees. The Goddess is seated on his left lap.<sup>86</sup>

## **3) Chakranarasimha Temple:**

This temple is at Chakratirtha road in Puri. In sanctum sanctorum there are three Narasimha images. Among the three the middle one is bigger than the other two and is seated inside the Chakra. It is known as Chakra Narasimha and the deity on left is Purushottamanarasimha and on the right is Anathanarasimha.<sup>87</sup>

Prof. K.S. Behera, an article on Narasimha Temple of Puri, Orissa available at [www.indianetzone.com/templesoforissa](http://www.indianetzone.com/templesoforissa).

Prof. Purma Chandra Mohapatra, An article 'Nrusimha Worship in Puri', Orissa Review, July-2008 pp.85-86 e-magazine at [www.orissa.gov.in](http://www.orissa.gov.in)  
Ibid p.86

#### **4) Singada Narasimha Temple:**

This temple is located near Lokanath temple in Puri. The presiding deity is four armed Lakshmi-Narasimha sitting on *Utkatikasan*. A small image of Goddess Lakshmi is sitting on the *yogapatta* at the left thigh of the lord. She is offering betel in her right hand looking to the god. She has a lotus in her left hand. Four handed Narasimha holds conch and disc in the upper hands and the lower two rest on knees. Seven hoods of the snake cover as canopy over his head, amidst which the face of Balabhadra is seen with plough.<sup>88</sup>

#### **5) Kanchisasana Narasimha Temple:**

Kanchisasana is a brahmana sasana village near Puri. This village is renowned for Narasimha worship. Most of the Brahmins are *Atharvavedins* and Narasimha is their tutelary deity. The presiding deity is four armed Lakshminarasimha.<sup>89</sup>

#### **6) Kusunkhuntia Jaga Narasimha Temple:**

It is in Harachandi Sahi in Puri. The presiding deity is four armed Saumya Narsimha. The peculiar feature is the absence of any Lakshmi figure. The deity is crowned with seven-hooded Adishesha which forms like a canopy over the head.<sup>90</sup>

### **V) MAHARASTRA**

#### **1) Nira Narsingapur:**

Nira Narsingapur is a village in Indapur Taluk of Pune District, Maharashtra. The confluence of rivers Bhima and Nira is about 3 kms from the temple. There is a famous temple of Lord Narasimha who is

<sup>88</sup> Ibid p.86

<sup>89</sup> Ibid p.86

<sup>90</sup> Ibid p.87

seated in Yoga posture in the sanctum. The Lord is the family deity for many families of different castes of the area.

It is believed that Prahlada had taken bath in Bhima River and with his own hands made the idol of Narasimha with sand of the river. The idol made of sand is still intact and it is said that diamond powder was smeared in the past, which does not disintegrate the sand. And again it is stated that one by name Mr. Dandavate got this diamond mixture imported from United States and smeared it on the idol to increase the life of the idol.<sup>91</sup>

In this temple premises, there is one more Narasimha idol, which is believed to be installed by Lord Brahma. Sri Raghavendra Swamy's Brindavan also exists in the temple premises. It is said that the present temple was renovated by Vittal Shiva devdani at the time of Maratha dynasty.

## **2) Dhom:**

Dhom is a village on the north Bank of river Krishna about 5 miles northwest of Wai with which it is connected by a motorable road in Satara District of Maharashtra. The main temple in between the river and village is dedicated to Lord Siva. Around this chief temple, there are four temples dedicated to Narasimha, Ganapathi, Laksmi and Vishnu, the images of which are made of they allow marble brought from Agra.

Out of these four temples, the Narasimha temple deserves mention for its presiding deity is Lord Narasimha in an awful Ugra form. It has a circular basement in an octagonal plinth about six feet high and is surmounted by a terrific structure made of mixed stucco and wood which is supposed to represent an umbrella. These temples were all



built by Mahadev Sivram, a Pune based Money Lender who flourished about 1780 AD.

This place is held in great veneration and it is said that Siva Linga was first set up by the sage Dhaumya. Local celebrations are held here in full moon of Vaisakha (April-May) for Lord Siva and in honor of Narasimha on the bright fourteenth of Vaisakha<sup>92</sup>.

### **3) Sadasivpet:**

In a temple at Sadasivpet, Pune, Lord Laksmi Narasimha is the presiding deity and the temple is built in 1774 AD<sup>93</sup>. The main idol was brought by a Brahmin of Ratnagiri from Panchavati (Nasik District).

### **4) Pokharni:**

Pokharni is a village located in Pokharni District of Maharashtra State. It is 20 kms from Parbani and has a railway station. A temple is dedicated to Lord Lakshmi Narasimha here in this place.

## **VI) Goa**

### **1) Ponda:**

The temple in Velinga, Ponda of Goa is dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha. It is said that the idol was brought from Sancoale, Marmugao taluk in 1567 and installed on a steep densely wooded forest and surrounded by the coconut trees. This temple is one of the more picturesque one around Ponda.

<sup>92</sup> Satara District Gazetteer, Department of District Gazetteers, Maharashtra.

<sup>93</sup> [www.india9.com/i9show/laksmiNarasimha-temple](http://www.india9.com/i9show/laksmiNarasimha-temple).

## VII) Uttaranchal

### 1) Joshi Math:

Joshimath is a pilgrim centre in north India and is believed to be one of the first Maths established by Sankaracarya. When Badrinath temple is closed in winter, devotees throng to worship at the Narasimha temple at Joshimath. The temple is about 1200 years old dedicated to Lord Vishnu and the presiding deity is Lord Narasimha, who is said to be installed by Sankaracarya himself. Like Badrinath, Lord Narasimha also is in a sitting *Padmasana* posture. The characteristic feature of this deity is that its left wrist is very thin and is getting thinner by the day, it is said.

Lord Vasudeva temple is located at just 30 yards from here, which is one of the 108 divyadesams extolled by Alvars in their pasurams<sup>94</sup>.

Asia's highest and longest ropeway connecting Joshimath and Auli (4 kms) is a special attraction of this place.

## VIII) Uttar Pradesh

### 1) Mathura:

On the bank of river Yamuna, Mathura (Brindavan), the birth place of Lord Krishna is well known, best loved temple complex of Lord Vishnu's incarnations. This is one of the most sought pilgrimage centre. The most popular and main shrine at Mathura is Lord Dvarakadhish temple to the north of the town dedicated to Lord Krishna.

<sup>94</sup> Source at [www.templenet.com/badri](http://www.templenet.com/badri)

There are about 25 ghats in Madhura and Visram Ghat is the most important among them and it is said that Lord Krishna rested here for sometime after killing Kamsa.

The Visram Ghat is lined up with eight elegant most important temples of Mathura viz., the Mukut Temple, Radha-Damodar, Murali Manohar, Neela-Kanteshwar, Yamuna-Krishna, Langali-Hanuman and Narasimha temples. In Narasimha temple the Lord is Varaha Narasimha.

## **IX) Madhya Pradesh**

### **1) Narasinghpur:**

Narsinghpur is the district headquarters in Madhya Pradesh. Narsinghpur has a big Narasimha temple and the presiding deity is Lord Narasimha. The lord has four hands with conch, cakra in the upper two hands while the lower two hands actually tear open the demon king.

It is said that this Narsinghpur was 'Gadariya Kheda' village in olden days and Khirwar clan Jat Sardars migrated from Brij and founded this city Narsinghpur, where they ruled for a long period. Khirwars of Narsinghpur were believed to be the followers of the Lord Narasimha and constructed this temple somewhere in 18<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>95</sup>.

The archeological surveys and excavation undertaken here indicate that this place has a very ancient history. Narmada River flowing through this district has many ghats like Brahmanghat, where it is said that Lord Brahma had done a Yagna. It is said that Pandavas had spent some time here in this place, which supports the existence of Bhimakund and Arjunakund in those areas.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Narsinghpur, Madhya Pradesh available at [www.indianetzone.com](http://www.indianetzone.com)

<sup>96</sup> History of Narsinghpur. A district of Madhya Pradesh at [www.narsinghpur.nic.in/history](http://www.narsinghpur.nic.in/history)

## X) RAJASTHAN

### 1) Amer Fort:

Set in a picturesque location, Amer is a fascinating blend of Hindu and Moghal architecture, built by Raja Mansingh in 16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. The old township of Amer situated at the fort hills of the palace has Narsingh temple.<sup>97</sup>

### 2) Hassampur:

A temple of Lord Narsingh was established by Swami Vishnudasji about 400 years ago in Hassampur 17 kms to Katputli.<sup>98</sup>

### 3) Gudha:

Gudha of Rajasthan is very popular for Sardarsher community, who are staunch devotees of Lord Narsingh. Lord Narsingh temple is situated there in Gudha and celebrations are conducted in connection with the Narasimha Jayanti, which come around April/May every year.<sup>99</sup>

A few selected temples, whose information is available is only touched upon. It is found that there is more number of Narasimha temples in southern part of India than in northern part with a emphasis on south India in general and the Andhra Pradesh in Particular. All together seventy temples are dealt with.

<sup>97</sup> Source [www.nikkistravel.com/rajasthan](http://www.nikkistravel.com/rajasthan)

<sup>98</sup> Source [www.wikimapia/11213916/narsingh-ji-ka-bada-mandir-hassampur](http://www.wikimapia/11213916/narsingh-ji-ka-bada-mandir-hassampur)

<sup>99</sup> Source [www.answers.com/topic/gudha](http://www.answers.com/topic/gudha)

The statistics of selected temples under the study state-wise is as follows.

Sl. No	State	Temples & Subshrines	L.N	Y.N	U.N	V.N	S.N	K.N	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	17	8	3	2	3	1(P ana kala )	0	17
2	Tamil Nadu	11 + 8	3	12	3	0	0	1	19
3	Karnataka	10	1	3	3		0	3	10
4	Kerala	7	2	1	2	0	0	2	7
5	Orissa	6	2	1	1	0	1	1	6
6	Maharashtra	4	1	1	0	0	0	2	4
7	Goa	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	Uttaranchal	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
9	Uttar Pradesh	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
10	Madhya Pradesh	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
11	Rajasthan	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
	Total	70	18	21	12	4	2	13	70

L.N:Lakshminarasimha, Y.N:Yoganarasimha, U.N.:Ugra/Vidarananarasimha,  
V.N:Varahanarasimha, J.N.:Jvlanarasimha, S.N.:Sudarashana/Chakranarasimha,  
K.N.:Kevalanarasimha

Among the Narasimha temples, there are thirteen are of Kevala Narasimha; eighteen are Lakshminarasimha; twelve are Ugranarasimha; twenty one are Yoganarasimha; four are Varahanarasimha and two are Sudarshana/Cakranarasimha temples. These statistics reveal that there is much popularity for the Lakshminarasimha and Yoganarasimha which are benign in forms.

CHAPTER IV  
NARASIMHA IN CLASSICAL  
SANSKRIT LITERATURE

## CHAPTER IV

### Narasimha in classical Sanskrit literature

In spite of the popularity enjoyed by the Narasimha myth and the recognition of the Narasimha as a powerful God through out the country even to the present day, no much literature was produced as much as that was woven around Rama and Krishna, the other two incarnations of Vishnu. Out of the literature produced on Narasimha, I could procure only three *campukavyas* and one drama to the credit of this God. However, there is abundant of *stotra* and *stuti* literature available in Sanskrit as well as in vernacular languages. The present study is confined to Sanskrit literature only.

#### **Campukavyas:**

*Campu* is a variety of classical Sanskrit literature, which is a combination of both prose and poetry (गद्यपद्यमयं चम्पूरित्यभिधीयते). There are few *campus* based on the story of Narasimha. The '*Narasimhacampu*'<sup>1</sup> of Daivagnasuri contains the myth of the sixth khanda of the *Padmapurana*. The notable change is that the demon king Hiranyakasipu attempts to change the attitude of Prahlada towards Vishnu through his friends. The attempts of Hiranyakasipu prove futile and Prahlada did not change his attitude. The *campu* consists of five parts (आश्रयः) and the author himself submits that he has delineated all the nine sentiments, the heroic sentiment (*Vira*) being the predominant sentiment.<sup>2</sup> In the preface, it is mentioned that there are three more *Narasimhacampus* composed by Kesavabhata, Narayana

<sup>1</sup> Daivagna Suri, *Narasimha Campu*, Ed. And Comm. By Sri Surya Kanta Sastri, Chowkhamba Vidya Bhavan, Varanasi, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. M. Gopalareddy and Dr. M. Sujatareddy, *Samskruta Sahitya Charitra* (in Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1986. P. 747

and Samkarshana.<sup>3</sup> The *Narasimhacampu* of Kesavabhata, who belongs to 17<sup>th</sup> century and hails from Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh,<sup>4</sup> is alone available wherein the Lord Narasimha's story is described in six chapters (स्तबकाः).

There is another campu called '*Narasimhavijayacampu*' of Narasimha Sastri<sup>5</sup>, which is based on the story of the *Bhagavatapurana*. At the end of the work, the poet states that the Lord Narasimha himself installed the best idol at Ahobalam for the benefit of his devotees.<sup>6</sup>

**Drama:** *Vasantikaparinayam*

The drama (*Nataka*) is considered as the finest form of literature (नाटकान्तं हि साहित्यम्) and is the best among the various literary forms (काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यम्). The only drama available on Narasimha is '*Vasantikaparinayam*<sup>7</sup>'. It was written by Sri Sathagopa yatindra Mahadesika, who was the 7<sup>th</sup> Jeeyer of the Ahobalamath. The story is based on a folk legend popular among Chenchus, a tribal community inhabitants on the mountain ranges of Nallamala forest in Andhra Pradesh. It goes on saying that the Lord Narasimha after His mission was over got cooled down and used to wander in the forest. Unexpectedly he happened to see a tribal girl, who was a daughter of the chieftain of the forest, Vasantika, by name. They both fell in love with each other and finally they got married with the approval of the elders. It appears that the marriage of the Lord with Vasantika has got the approval of the Goddess Lakshmi.

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<sup>3</sup> Daivagnasuri, *Narasimhacampu*, preface. pp. 2-3

<sup>4</sup> Dr. M. Gopalareddy and M. Sujathareddy, *Samskruta Sahitya Caritra*, P. 751

<sup>5</sup> Narasimha Sastri, *Narasimha Vijaya Campu*, and Pub: by V.B. Nataraja Sastri, Thiruchirapalli, 1969.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> Sri Sathagopa Yatindra Mahadsikan, *Vasantika Parinayam*, Ahobalamath, Chennai. 2002..



Sri Sathagopa Yatindra Mahadesika, the pontiff of Ahobalamath was a great scholar, poet and critic and Tirumalacharya is the name in his previous *asram*. He was born in the year 1440 A.D. at Balavanam, near Kanchipuram, Tamilnadu and is endowed with a good number of titles like '*Satalekhini Lekhananuguna Kavitadurandhara*' and '*Kavitarkika Kantheerava*'. He wrote two works namely '*Sathagopalamkara* and *Harikathasarah* on rhetorics. He was initiated to *sanyasa* at the age of 25 and became the pontiff (the head of the tradition) of the Ahobalamath in the year 1513 and continued till his death in 1522. He is believed to be the guru of the well known Telugu poet Allasani Peddana, one of the *astadiggajams* in the court of Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire<sup>8</sup>. This is an excellent contribution of His Holiness towards the propagation of Narasimha cult through literature. This drama *Vasantikaparinayam* is divided into five acts.

This drama was critically edited by Dr. J. Nancharaiah and got Ph. D degree for it from the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetham, Tirupati in 2001.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Stotras and Stutis:***

Other than the above *campus* and a drama, the literature available on Narasimha is a good number of various *stotras* and *stutis*, which form a major component of *laghukavas*. There are many *stotras* and *stutis* authored by great *acaryas* like Sankaracarya etc, but majority of *stotras* and *satakas* suffer from the absence of the particulars like the name of the author and his place and date. Though it is not possible to discuss all of them, an attempt is being made to provide as much

<sup>8</sup> Dr. M. S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), *Sri Naraasimha Avatara*, P. 193

<sup>9</sup> An unpublished thesis work '*Vasantikaparinayam*' critically edited by Dr. J. Nancharaiah, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetham, Tirupati, 2001

information as possible about the *stotras* that cover as different aspect of poetry. Particularly there are *pancaratnastotra*, *astakas*, *dvadashanastotras*, *karavalambanastotras*, *rnavimocanastotras*, *bhujangaprayatastotras*, *astottarasatastotras*, and *sahasranamastotras*, highlighting the benevolent and compassionate attitude of the Lord Narasimha. According to the tradition, Sankaracarya, the exponent of advaita Vedanta is said to have composed the famous stotras like 'Sri Lakshminarasimhakaravalambanastotra'<sup>10</sup> (Ap-I,pp.18-23) and 'Narasimhapancaratanastotra'<sup>11</sup>(Ap-I,pp.13-14). *Rnavimocananarasimha stotra* (Ap-I,pp.23-24) also is said to be written by him.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. M. S. Rajajee narrates consequences that lead Sankara to compose the *karavalambanastotra* of Lakshminarasimha.<sup>13</sup> It is said that in one of the triumphal tours of the country, that was intended to defeat the other religious opponents, Sankara met Mandana Mishra, a renowned scholar and debater. When the later was about to be defeated, his wife Ubhaya Bharati joined the debate and announced that the success of Sankara would be complete only if he defeat her also. The debate went on and she realised that it is not easy to defeat him. She turned the debate into the matters of kamasastra, knowing Sankara being a bachelor that he could not answer and if answered has to face social censure with a doubt as to how he could know all those being a serene bachelor. Sankara sought time to reply and entered the body of a dead king to know the matters of *Kamastastra*. He asked his disciples to hide and protect his body till his return. When the king awoke, all his wives and his councilors bemoaning his death were astonished. The king enjoyed all the worldly pressures. However the queen Empress suspecting something unnatural element and wishing to

<sup>10</sup> Sri Lakshminarasimhasahasranamamulu, Mohan Adhyatmika Grandha Nilayamu,Rajahmundry, Pp.74-79

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp. 73-74

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 92

<sup>13</sup> Dr. M. S. Rajajee, *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, pp. 108-109.

retain the consciousness in king's body orders to burn all the dead bodies in the country at once. When the royal soldiers, found Sankara's body and began to set it to fire from an end. The disciples of Sankara immediately recalled Sankara to return into his body at once. Meanwhile a small portion of the body was already set to fire. Then it is said that Sankara praised Lord Lakshminarasimha seeking his blessings to come over from the difficulties with a refrain 'Sri Lakshmi narasimha mama dehi karavalambam'. Later by the grace of the Lord Narasimha the body of Sankara retained its original luster.<sup>14</sup>

This *stotra* is believed to be very powerful to ward off all kinds of dangers. Slight variations are found in different versions and the more common text is taken. This *stotra* contains total 25 *slokas* out of which last three *slokas* form as *phalasaruti*. It is stated that whoever recite it with devotion will get rid off all sins, become virtuous, free from calamities and will have no re-birth.

The forty fourth pontiff of Ahobalamath Sri Vedanta Desika Yatindra Mahadesika composed another *karavalambanastotra* of Lakshminarasimha on the lines of Sankara with same makuta.<sup>15</sup>

*Sri Lakshminarasimhapancaratanastotra* consists of five *slokas* and *Rnavimocanastotra* consists of nine *slokas*. The *phalasaruti* of *rnavimocanastotra* states that one who reads that will be cleared of all debts and become rich without financial problems. The 354<sup>th</sup> chapter of third part of the *Vishnudharmottarapurana* contains 'Lingaspota narasimhastotra'. It is in a mixed form of prose and poetry.

<sup>14</sup> Krishnamachariar, M. **History of Classical Sanskrit Literature**, pp. 348-349.

<sup>15</sup> Sri Lakshminarasimhakaravalambana stotra, Sri Vishnusahasranamastotra and other stotras, Sri Ahobala Math, Hyderabad, 2009. Pp.41-44

### **Srikamasikastakam:**

The *stotra* '*Srikamasikastakam*'<sup>16</sup> is of eight *slokas* with one more *sloka* as *phalasaruti* written by the reputed scholar and poet Vedanta Desika of 13<sup>th</sup> century. This *stotra* is addressed to Lord Narasimha at Velukkai, south Kanchipuram; Tamilnadu. It is stated that he named this *stotra*, since the Lord emerged there at his own will. It is in *anustubh* meter.

### **Sri Narasimhamangalāsana:**

His Holiness Sri Parankusa Ramanuja (1762-1774), the 24<sup>th</sup> Pontiff of the Math wrote '*Narasimhamangalāsana*'.<sup>17</sup> (Ap-I, pp.10-12).

### ***Nrsimhastava:***

His Holiness Sri Parankusa (1497-151), the 6<sup>th</sup> Pontiff of Ahobalamath wrote '*Nrsimhastava*'.<sup>18</sup> '*Srilakshminarasimhastava*'<sup>19</sup> was written by His Holiness Sri Viraraghava Yatindra Mahadesika (1827-1830), the 27<sup>th</sup> Pontiff, who was an erudite scholar and poet, who was known for his *stavas* and '*Vaikunthavijayacampu*'.

### ***Nrsimhāvilāsa:***

Sri Krishnabrahmatantra Parakalāsawamy (1839-1916), the 31<sup>st</sup> head of the Parakalamath wrote '*Nrsimhāvilāsa*' and his erudition can be known by his 67 works covering all the disciplines of knowledge. He wrote three *campukavyas* namely *Rangarajāvilāsa*, *Srinivasāvilāsa* and *Kartikotsavadīpika* besides many *stotras*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Srikamasikastakam, Sri Vishnusahasranamastotra and other stotras. pp. 60-61

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 282.

<sup>18</sup> Krishnamachariar, M. **History of Classical Sanskrit Literature**. P. 282

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 282.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp. 282-283.

### **Narasimhastakam:**

There are two *Narasimhastakas*. One is authored by Sri Vadiraja yati<sup>21</sup> in *anustubh* meter with 9 slokas last being *phalasruti*. (Ap-I, pp.15-17). Another *Narasimhastakam*<sup>22</sup> the author of which is not known is in *Malini* meter with 9 slokas, wherein the last being *phalasruti*.

### **Srinarasimhapancamrtastotras:**

There are four Sri *Narasimhapancamrta stotras* of Narasimha. One is said to be composed by the Lord Rama himself<sup>23</sup>; the author of the second is not known<sup>24</sup>; the third is written by Sri Sheshadharm<sup>25</sup> and the last one is available at Ahobalamath.<sup>26</sup>

### **Narasimhastuti:**

Kavikulatilaka Trivikrama panditarya<sup>27</sup> has written Sri '*Narasimhastuti*' in 22 slokas last two slokas as *phalasruti* in *Malini* meter. The poet states that he is the son of Likucha tilaka and this stuti confers longevity, peace and prosperity on the reciters.

### **Narasimha kavaca:**

This *Narasimhakavacam* is said to be part and parcel of the *Brahmandapurana* and is stated Prahlada himself recited this *kavaca*. This kavaca consists of 31 slokas, but last 19 slokas describes the merits of chanting this and can be taken as *phalasruti*. This is composed in *anustubh* meter. (Ap-I, pp.51-55)

<sup>21</sup> Dr. M. S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>22</sup> Sri Vishnusahasranamastotra and other stotras, Sri Ahobala Math, Hyderabad, 2009, Pp. 47-48

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-78

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.79

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Dr.M. S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), *Sri Narasimha Avatara*, pp. 152-153

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp. 151-152

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp. 162-167

### ***Sri Lakshminarasimhasuprabhatam:***

There are two Sri Lakshminarasimha suprabhatams, the first version being recited at the temple of Narasimha, Yadagirigutta, Nalgonda district and is cited in appendix-1. (pp.1-4.). The other is mentioned by Rajajee.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Sri Narasimhamangalasanam:***

Sri Mukkur Lakshmi Narasimha Cariar wrote '*Sri Simhacalamangalam*' on Varahanarasimha swami of Simhacalam and '*Mattapallimangalastakam*' on Mattapalli Lakshminarasimha.

### **Stotras:**

Sri Kasturi Sivasankara Sastri (1833-1917) has composed '*Nrsimhastotra*'<sup>29</sup>. He is a Sanskrit pandit worked in Govt. Arts College, Rajahmundry, and A.P. and besides many philosophical works he also wrote many *stotras* like *Stotrakadamba*, *Sivanandalahari* etc.

'*Lakshminarasimhastotra*' was written by Parithiyur Krishnasastri (1842-1911) and his other works are *Sriminakshisataka*, *Malinisataka* etc.

There are two *dandakas* (DC XVIII – 6707 & 7034) and two *bhujangaprayatastotras* (DC XIX – 6862 & 7033) which are available in the Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp. 147-150.

<sup>29</sup> Krishnamachariar, M. *History of Classical Literature*. P. 332

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp. 493 & 495.

## Dhyana Slokas:

The '*Rupadhyanaratnavali*' contains a few *dhyanaslokas* that prescribe the important iconographical features of the different images of the Lord Narasimha. For instance -

Sri Lakshmi Narasimha:<sup>31</sup>

शरध्वन्द्वनिभं देवं शङ्खचक्रवराभयान् ।  
विभाणं पुण्डरीकाक्षं लक्ष्यालिङ्गितविग्रहम् ॥  
सिंहवक्त्रं महाकायं नृसिंहं हुदि भावयेत् ।

Sri Narasimha:

नारसिंहः श्वेतवर्णः गदशङ्खारिपद्मभृत् ।<sup>32</sup>  
ज्वलदग्निसमाकारं सिंहवक्त्रं नराङ्गकम् ।  
दंष्ट्राकरालवदनं लोलजिह्वासुभीषणम् ॥  
वृत्तास्यं जटिलं कृद्धमालीढं पीनवक्षसम् ।  
अभेध्य तीक्ष्णनखरमात्मोरुकृतदानवम् ॥  
तद्वक्षो दारयन्तं च कराभ्यां नखरैर्भृशम् ।  
गदाचक्रधरं द्वाभ्यां नृसिंहं प्रणमेत्प्रभुम् ॥<sup>33</sup>

Astamukha Gandabherunda Narasimha:

वन्देऽहं कुरघोरप्रबलतरमहागण्डभेरुन्डसिंहं  
व्याघ्राश्वक्रोडशाखामृगवरखगराङ्गभल्लूकाद्यष्टवक्त्रम् ।  
द्वात्रिंशत्कोटिबाहुं हलमुखलगदाशङ्खचक्रादिहेती  
विभाणं भीषदंष्ट्रं शरभखगगजान्भक्षयन्तं नृसिंहम् ॥<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Rupadhyaana ratnavali, Ed by S.M. Ganapathy Stapathi, \Endowment Dept., Govt. of

A. P. p. 211

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 218

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 223-224

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 229

Sri Pancavaktra Narasimha.<sup>35</sup>

पञ्चवक्त्रं महाभीमं कालानलसमप्रभम् ।  
मुण्डमालाधरं रौद्रं कण्ठहारेण शोभितम् ॥  
नागयज्ञोपवीताद्यां पञ्चाननसुशोभितम् ।  
चन्द्रमौलिं नीलकण्ठं प्रतिवक्त्रं त्रिलोचनम् ॥  
भुजैः परिघसंकाशैर्दशभिश्चोपशोभितम् ।  
अक्षसूत्रं गदां पद्मं शङ्खं गोक्षीरसन्निभम् ॥  
धनुश्च मुखलं चैव तथा चक्रं महाप्रभम् ।  
खड्गं च शूलपाशौ च नृसिंहं रुद्ररूपिणम् ॥  
इन्द्रगोपकनीलाभां चन्द्राभं स्वर्णसन्निभम् ।  
पूर्वादिमोत्तरांतास्य मूर्धास्यं सर्वं वर्धकम् ॥  
बिभाणं सर्वजगतामाधारं गिरिकन्यके ।

There are many more stotras and stutis are prevalent. Hence, this selection is not exhaustive, but random only. In addition, there are many loose verses also composed by the poets and scholars in their works as per convenience.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p...



CHAPTER- V  
EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF NARASIMHA CULT

## CHAPTER- V

### Evolution and Development of Narasimha Cult

It is observed in the foregone chapters how a simple episode of Narasimha myth found in the *Mahabharata* has acquired a gigantic magnitude in the later religio-philosophical sphere of literature. It is obvious that variations will take place from *Purana* to *Purana* in the process of development. The version of Narasimha myth in the *Bhagavatapurana* has reached its peak in establishing its all pervasiveness of the Lord Narasimha and his benignant and benevolent attitude towards his votaries. This attitude has carved a special niche in the hearts of masses. As mentioned earlier Lord Narasimha, the incarnation of Vishnu is worshipped and revered by all, irrespective of their philosophical affinities and religious attachments (such as the *Advaita*, the *Visistadvaita* and the *Dvaita* viz. the Saivites, the Vaisnavites and the *Madhvas*). The great *Advaita* philosopher Adisankaracarya has composed two *stotras* in praise of Lord Narasimha "*Srilakshminarasimha karavalambastotra*" and "*Srilakshminarasimha karunarasastrotra*" as a token of his gratitude to the Lord for protecting him when he was in trouble. Following this tradition, the saivites used to worship Lord Narasimha. It is evident from the fact that in some Siva temples, either a separate shrine for Lord Narasimha is built or he is included in the *parivaradevata* (Ap-II,p.14) can be witnessed even now. At Simhacalam, the idol of the presiding deity Varaha Narasimha appears in the shape of a *linga* and the *Kshetrapala* is Siva.

A popular folk legend in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh is that the Lord Narasimha after killing Hiranyakasipu used to wander in the forest ferociously and became pacified and cool down after looking at a Chencita, the daughter of the Tribal Chieftain of Ahobalam area and fell in love with her and finally married. It is believed that the Chenchita was

none other than the Goddess Lakshmi in human form and hence she was called Chenchu Lakshmi. With this back ground, the tribal people consider the lord as their son-in-law and they worship with much reverence. So Lord Narasimha is worshipped not only by the Protectors the kings but also by the tribes the protected, who generally worship the local deities (*gramadevatas*). This shows the spectrum of acceptance of the Lord.

Whatever may be the variations we find in several *Puranas*, including the reason of safeguarding Prahlada, his devotee; the central theme of Narasimha myth is the Lord assuming the most appropriate powerful form to subdue the demon king Hiranyakasipu, who became invincible by his boons. All the myths and legends centre upon power and hence took deep root among the faithful<sup>1</sup>.

The man-lion concept might have been conceived as Lion symbolizing the power. That is why the predominant part of a whole is called *simhabhaga* (Lion-share); the main door is called *simhadvara* (Lion's entrance); the royal seat is called Simhasana. The throne itself is physically carved with the figures of lions on either side. The crown of the king embellished with lion's image. All these establish that the animal lion is conceived has as the symbol of power. This might have been led the rulers of the land to worship and patronize the deity Narasimha for acquiring power and prosperity.

With the acceptance of the Man-Lion form of Vishnu by most of the sections of the society without barriers of caste, creed and sects, the growth of the cult is gradual and considerable through out the country in general and in south India in particular.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid P. 24.

Among the ten avatars, the most worshipped and regarded incarnations are Rama, Krishna and Narasimha. Over a period of time, Narasimha grew in popularity as there were no restrictions of caste or religious belief for His worship and to an extent appears as even to have surpassed the popularity of Rama and Krishna. The more number of Narasimha temples than Rama and Krishna especially in south India vouchsafe this fact. The noteworthy point here is that while Rama and Krishna manifestations spent their full life in this world, Narasimha manifestation is very short-lived. In spite of it, Narasimha manifestation has acquired much reverence and popularity.

Once, the Narasimha manifestation commanded great reverence and popularity as a powerful deity, it became necessary for the mode of worship to be evolved. The *Agama* and *Purana* texts used to provide the information regarding the kinds of images, the formulae (mantras), the diagrams (yantras), the sacred stones (*salagramas*) and the methods of worship the deity etc. Following these texts, the Narasimha cult developed by having separate temples and forms of mantras, etc. Accordingly the temple were constructed and the rituals were followed in temples of Narasimha in due course of time. The Narasimha *Gayatri* is formed on the lines of revered Vedic *Gayatri* in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* as “वज्रनखाय विग्रहे तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्राय धीमहि तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात्”. Three Upanishads namely the *Nrsimhapoorvatapinyupanishad*, the *Nrsimhottaratapinyupanishad* and the *Narasimhashatcakropanishad* came into existence, which are named after the Lord Narasimha. The *Narasimhapoorvatapiiyupanishad* contains the following *Nrsimhamantra*

“उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।

नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥”

When the worship of Lord Narasimha became popular due to his easy accessibility and benevolence to protect from difficulties and conferring boons, the Narasimhamantra became 'Mantraraja' or king among mantras. The *Narasimhapoorvatapinyupanishad* proclaims that this *mantraraja* is the basis for all creation and *prajapati* with the help of this mantra created the world<sup>2</sup>. The Upanishad also tells that meditation of this *mantraraja* is to be followed by four *angamantras* (ancillary mantras) 1) *Pranava* 2) *Savitri* 3) *Yajurlakshmi* and 4) *Narasimhagayatri*. The *Skandapurana* declares that there was no *mantra* and there would be no *mantra* more effective than this *mantra* because it confers 'moksa' (salvation) and is equal to performing of a sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> *Bijakshara* (seed mantra) 'ॐ' (*kshroum*) came into existence. *Mantras* with different number of letters evolved as discussed earlier. Apart from the *mantras*, the *Tantrasastra* evolved a 'Narasimhayatra,' which is complementary to the mantra and is a geometric delineation of the mantra. The 'Cakra' a form of yantra is also evolved in the same way. Worship of cakra is believed to be effective in curing diseases and conferring prosperity. It can be observed that the *Narasimhacakra* is similar in diametric form of the *Sudarshanacakra*. The 'Narasimhamudra,' a yogic gesture, a mystic inter twining of the fingers and hands have become a part of religious worship. There are various mudras for worship depending on different occasions like chanting, meditation, and rites for achieving specific objectives, *abhiseka* etc.

In the worship of a deity, *salagramas*, natural stone formations found in the river *Gandaki* in Nepal, play a vital role, since they are believed to be the manifestations of the deity. These *salagramas* are distinguished by the marks of whirls, spirals and dots that they contain. It requires special expertise to identify these *salagramas*. These

<sup>2</sup> Nrsimha Poorva tapaniyopanishad.

<sup>3</sup> Dr.M.S. Rajajee, Sri Narasimha Avatara P. 25.

*salagramas* are worshipped in isolation or along with other *salagramas*. There are *salagramas* for all the deities.

We have already discussed elsewhere different types of *Narasimhasalagramas*. There are 24 varieties of *salagramas* of Lord Narasimha as noticed by Sri S.K. Ramachandra Rao<sup>4</sup>. The scriptures state that the Lord resides in many places in which he may be worshipped, but among all the places *salagrama* is the best, since this form is believed to be supremely effective. As more and more postures were found in the *Shilpasastra* for Lord Narasimha, more and more varieties of *Salagramas* are also available to him. It also contributed for the development of Narasimha cult.

The Narasimha cult is further developed simultaneously by the patronization of the rulers. Narasimha with lion head being the embodiment of valour and strength, many more kings patronized and propitiated the Lord for either expanding their territory or to regain their lost kingdoms. The Lord Narasimha was viewed as God of War and a dispeller of troubles. It is believed that by merely touching and praying the Lord Narasimha, victory in war was assured. Similarly it is believed that when there is a danger to life or while in forest or one is under the influence of evil planets, the recitation of Narasimha's name is beneficial in warding off evils. This can be seen by Sri Adi Sankaracarya's *Narasimhakaravalambana* and *Karunarasa stotras* rendered by him to get rid of the troubles.

Some of the ruling dynasties like the Guptas who ruled almost all the of north, the Vakatakas, who ruled some parts of the present Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh from 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, the Kadambas of Goa of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> AD, the eastern Ganga dynasty which reigned from Kalinga ( forming some parts of present Orissa, West Bengal,

S.K. Ramachandra Rao, *Salagrama kosa*.

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh) during 11<sup>th</sup> century to 15<sup>th</sup> century and the Vijayanagar empire of south India during 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century have worshipped Lord Narasimha with reverence and ardent devotion as their tutelary deity (इष्टदेवता)<sup>5</sup>. Besides these dynasties Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Pallavas, Pandyas also patronized Vaisnavism, which also helped for the steady growth of Narasimha cult.

Prof. Kalpana Desai in her work '*Iconography of Vishnu*'<sup>6</sup> establishes that this Narasimha worship belongs to the Gupta period by quoting several images of Narasimha found through out northern India. She mentions an early representation of Narasimha, which is executed on a seal found at Basarh, Bihar, datable to early Gupta period. Narasimha with Lion's face and human body is seated on a high pedestal with left leg folded and right leg hanging down and also with two hands. The right hand is raised in 'abhayamudra' and the left is rested on his knee in the image. The Gwalior Museum has similar Narasimha image found at Besnagar, Madhya Pradesh. A similar image found in Pahlejpur, M.P. is lying in a shrine dedicated to Narasimha. Even though the temple is in a ruined state, the image survives in much mutilated state. This image enshrined in a Gupta temple dedicated to Narasimha, testifies to the high position enjoyed by Narasimha during Gupta period. A typical feature of these images is the absence of the demon Hiranyakasipu and so also the emblems of Vishnu.<sup>7</sup>

In the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, there are two square pillars belonging to the Gupta period, on each side of which is carved a Vaishnava deity. The four-handed standing image of Narasimha is represented on one of the four sides of both the pillars. The upper two

<sup>5</sup> Prof. Purna Chandra Mahapatra, an article 'Narasimha worship in Puri', Orissa Review, July 2008, e-magazine P. 83

<sup>6</sup> Kalpana Desai, *Iconography of Vishnu*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1973, pp 84-96  
Ibid p.86

hands carry the Mace and the Disc. Except the lion's face, these two images are similar to the standing four-handed Vishnu.<sup>8</sup>

A unique representation of Narasimha with five other images is found on a hillock near Kondamotu, 40 kms from Guntur, A.P. The main figure of Narasimha is flanked by five other, two on the right and three on the left. Narasimha is represented as couching lion with taut legs. Srivatsa is prominently found on his chest. At the level of neck, this lion has two human hands holding the Mace and the Disc. The other images are Vishnu and Kama on the right and Krishna, Balarama and Aniruddha on the left. This panel may perhaps represent the Narasimha and the Pancavira worship. If this interpretation is right, it can be said that the prevalence of Pancavira worship exists in the early Bhagavata religion. Though no such image is found in northern India, it is probable that this cult also existed therein and before Gupta period.<sup>9</sup> The images of Narasimha found in the Philadelphia Museum and made of Mathura molted red sand stone (Ap-II,p.9), described by Stella Kramrisch, the then museum's Indian curator is perhaps the earliest images of Narasimha yet to be known. She attributed them to 2-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D, when the strict rules for the iconography for the Hindu deities had not yet been evolved'-says Michael W. Meinster in his article "Man and Man-Lion: The Philadelphia Narasimha" and assigned them to Gupta period.<sup>10</sup>

The number of Narasimha images found from the Gupta period is itself a testimony to the prevalence of the Narasimha cult in that period. The Narasimha images of gupta period are not only numerous but varied widely from iconographical aspects. Without strong patronization of the rulers and support to the cult by the people, this kind of variant

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 87

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pp. 87-88

<sup>10</sup> Michael W. Meinster. Man and Man-Lion: The Philadelphia Narasimha, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol.56, No3/4, 1996 pp. 291-301



iconographical forms might not have evolved. Hence it is likely that Gupta kings patronized Narasimha worship and even the last of the Gupta kings is named after the deity. A temple dedicated to Narasimha at Pahlejpur testifies to Narasimha as a cult deity during that period.<sup>11</sup>

In the post- Gupta period, Narasimha is almost invariably represented as killing the demon Hiranyakasipu. This emphasis might be the influence of the post-Gupta texts, where the destruction of the demon is reflected predominantly and a number of *dhyanaslokas* evolved to that effect. Four-handed images of Narasimha of post-Gupta period are found abundantly in different parts of northern India. Special mention may be made of the eight-handed image of Narasimha found in Lucknow Museum datable to 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> The upper hands hold the *Nagapasa*, together with the end of *Nagapasa* the upper left hand also holds a shield. The second pair of hands holds the Mace and the Disc. The third pair is broken and the fourth pair is engaged in tearing open the entrails of the demon lying on the folded right leg of the deity. The Goddess Lakshmi with a lotus in her right hand on the right side and on the left side an attendant with a snake in his hand is found. Brahma and Siva are carved above the panel. Another four-handed image of Narasimha with upper hands holding *pasa* is in the Gwalior Museum. The presence of *Nagapasa* may point to the Saivite or the Tantric affinity of Narasimha cult.

Yet another unique feature of this Narasimha cult is its association with Lord Jagannatha cult. The close association might be the result of an amalgamation of Narasimha cult with Jagannatha cult of Puri. In Sirpur Stone inscription of Panduvamsi queen regent Vasata, who ruled in the first half of 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD on behalf of her minor son King Mahasivagupta Balarjuna paid her homage to Lord Purushottama

and sought the blessings of Lord Narasimha by addressing 'ॐ नरसिंह पुरुषोत्तमाय' followed by narrating the greatness of *Narasimhavatara* in three verses.<sup>13</sup>

Although Narasimha was mentioned in 8<sup>th</sup> century in Sirpur inscriptions, the worship of Kevalanarasimha in upper Mahanandi valley was prevalent in the Nala Kingdom of 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century AD due to the influence of Vakatakas of Nagavardhana, whose tutelary deity (इष्टदेवता) was Kevalanarasimha. Therefore, we find three Narasimha images at Podagarh, Sarguli and Parwa in Nagarangapur District, which are believed to be the images of Vakataka period that conquered Puskari (Podagarh) of the Nala Kings in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD<sup>14</sup>.

A huge Kevalanarasimha image of about five feet is being worshipped at Ramtek Hill temple near Nagpur, Maharashtra, which is strikingly similar to the Kevalanarasimha images found in Orissa. The Ramtek temple is dated back to 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century AD i.e., Vakatakas ruled from Nagavardhana (present Nagardhan near Nagpur). Therefore, the worship of Kevalanarasimha might have been instituted by Vakatakas.

The common image of Narasimha killing the demon king Hiranya Kasipu can be seen as *Parvsadevata* in almost all temples Vaishnava and Saiva temples in and around Puri. There is some affinity between Lord Jagannath's body and Lord Narasimha's appearance from the pillar. Eschmann has opined that the head of Lord Jagannath might be symbolic of Lion-head, with the Lord's round eyes being typical feature

<sup>13</sup> The inscription was edited by Hiralal; vide *Epigraphia Indica*, Volume XI PP. 84- 292. Cf. S.S. Panda, an article 'Purushottama Jagannatha is purushottama Narasimha', *Orissa Review*, June, 2006. E-magazine. PP 150-151 .

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* PP 151-152.

of Lord Narasimha's<sup>15</sup>. As for the identification of Lord Jagannath with that of Narasimha, it has been noted by German Scholar H.V. Stietencron that 'even today, Narasimha plays an important role in the periodical renewal of the wooden image of Jagannath. Jagannath is also worshipped with the Narasimhamantra'<sup>16</sup> All the rituals at Jagannath temple commence with Narasimhamantra. Most probably it is during the 8<sup>th</sup> century that Purushottama Narasimha got amalgamated with Lord Jagannath. This has become one of the main factors for the popularity and spreading of the Narasimha cult in eastern India.

Next is the affinity of this cult with Saivism. S.S. Panda<sup>17</sup> quotes the learned scholar late Anncharlotte Eschmann – "The representation of Lingodbhava, where Siva appears within or from the endless flaming lingam, usually represented as a huge column, resembles the scene of Narasimha bursting out of Pillar". This connection is represented in one of the early Siva temples in Orissa near Baramba called Simhanath. This figure simhanath is carved on the front entrance in a standing posture with human torso and lion head holding a trident. This indicates Siva-Narasimha or Siva-incorporating Narasimha. Probably Adi Sankaracarya's visit to Puri and his stotras on Narasimha might have influenced this kind of affinity of Narasimha cult with the Saivism in Orissa and in other parts of India also. We can find separate Narasimha shrines in some of the famous Siva Temples. This helped in the acceptance of the Narasimha cult by all schools of Hinduism unlike other forms of Vishnu.

This elaboration of the iconography of Narasimha from two hands to multiple hands like four , six, eight ,twelve and varied

<sup>15</sup> Prof. Poomachandra Mahapatra, an article 'Narasimha worship in Puri' Orissa Review July,2008 P. 89.

<sup>16</sup> S.S. Panda, an article in Puroshuttama Jagannath is Purushottama Narasimha' Orissa Review, June, 2006 p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid P. 185.

weapons that Narasimha hold and also his association with the Saivite emblems testify the impact of Tantricism on Narasimha cult towards the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Lord Narasimha ceased to be merely an incarnation of Vishnu and attained the position of an individual deity with Tantric significance.

Another important feature of Narasimha is his influence in Jain Mythology. The ceiling of the Jain temple of Vimalavasah at Abu contains a twelve-handed Narasimha. The upper most right hand of the deity is stretched out to the fore-head as if in *abhayamudra*; the second right hand is also in *abhayamudra*; the third is in the act of tearing open the bosom of the demon; the fourth is holding a Mace; the fifth is piercing the abdomen of the demon and the sixth is holding the demon's leg. Similarly on the left side, the upper two most hands are broken; the third is proceeding to attack the demon; the fourth and fifth hold the Disc and an indistinct object and the sixth is tearing open the entrails of the demon. The God's rolling eyes and lolling tongue give him a fierce look.<sup>18</sup> This indicates the influence and acceptability of Narasimha into Jain Mythology.

In Southern India, Narasimha commands much more popularity, which is evident by the fact that Lord Narasimha is believed to have been manifested at Ahobalam, Andhra Pradesh to kill the demon Hiranyakasipu. Innumerable temples of Narasimha still exist and regular worship is carried out in almost all southern states either in independent temples of Narasimha or in the separate shrines in the temple complexes of other main gods. This Narasimha cult is patronized and flourished in the south under the reign of the Hoyasala, Pandya, Calukya, and Vijayanagara rulers. As such, it can be seen that Narasimha cult spread in almost all the parts of India and His impact can be seen everywhere. We find a beautiful carving of Narasimha

<sup>18</sup> Kalpana Desai, *Iconography of Vishnu*. P. 93

tearing open the entrails of the demon in the northern long-room of Banteay srei complex, Cambodia along with other Indian deities.

As seen in the early stages, mostly the images of Narasimha are with two hands i.e. Kevalanarasimha, but from medieval period as the cult expanded, its iconography became complex growing into multiple hands. Narasimha worship is influenced by Tantricism. He occupied the position of a cult deity rather than just remaining as an incarnation of Vishnu.<sup>19</sup>

### **Fine Art forms associated with the deity Narasimha**

Different forms of performing arts in the vernacular languages also have given a fillip for the development of Narasimha cult. Narasimha myth exists in almost all performing arts of India such as the *Bhagavatamela* of Tamil Nadu, *Yakshagana* of Karnataka, *Burrakatha* of Andhra Pradesh, *Bharatanatyam* of Karnatik music and even in the form of paintings etc. (Ap-II, pp.11-12)

The contribution of the *Bhagavatamela* of Tamil Nadu street theatre tradition is the one worth mentioning here, which helped for the propagation of Narasimha cult. This street tradition came into being around 1572-1614 by Achyutappa Nayak, who granted certain villages to Bagavatars migrated from Andhra Pradesh for the avowed purpose of promoting dance-drama tradition<sup>20</sup>.

A cluster of six villages Mellatur, Saliangalam, Uttukadu, Nallur, Soolamangalam and Thepperumanallur carry this dance-drama tradition even today with the members of those families wherever they may be congregating for this purpose. A composer of great renown Melattur Venkata Rama Sastri (1759-1847), a contemporary of saint

<sup>19</sup> Ibid p. 94

<sup>20</sup> Kamala Vasudevan, an article 'The Bhagavata Mela, Dance Drama' at [www.chitralakshana.com](http://www.chitralakshana.com)

Thyagaraja composed many songs and dance-dramas, of which special mention is to be made for his '*Prahladacaritam*' (in Telugu).

Every year in the month of May/June, *Narasimhajayanti* is celebrated in these villages with great devotion for five days. On *Narasimhajayanti* day '*Prahladacaritam*' is enacted not just as a mere theatre performance but as a ritual homage to the God. It is invested with all the spirit of true Bhakti. The main play begins at around 10 pm at night and Narasimha makes his appearance at around 4:30 am, the following morning. It has to be ensured that the manifestation of Narasimha coincides with religious legend with time, when it is neither night nor day. The special focus is on the mask used by the character of Narasimha which is revered as equal to the God himself.<sup>21</sup>

The characters, especially, the lord and the demon getting into '*Avesam*' (frenzy) jump into the audience and often need to be separated to save them<sup>22</sup>. Thus the drama is enacted throughout the night. The *Yakshaganas* popular in Karnataka also trace this kind of street plays. The specialty of these *Yakshaganas* is that the roles of women are enacted by men only like in traditional Kuchipudi. The dance dramas of Melattur Venkata Rama Sastri have served as a source for the *Yakshagana*. However, Narayanatirtha of *Sri Krishnaleelatarangani*, who preceded Melattur Venkata Rama Sastri, is believed to be the father of this *Yakshagana*.

Though Jayadeva's '*Gitagovindam*' and Narayanatirtha's *Krishnaleelatarangani* are intended to describe the sports of the Lord Krishna, they make a reference to the manifestation of Narasimha here and there. Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed *kritis* on Narasimha of

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.  
Dr.M.S. Rajajee, IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara P. 199.

Sholinghur<sup>23</sup>. He praised *Sobhanachalanarasimha* of Akiripalli in a *kriti* in the sixth Tarangam of his work.

In Andhra Pradesh, we find *Burrakatha* a popular method of telling a story by a balladeer in rural areas. The balladeer carries symbols with which he keeps time, while singing, while two other carry drums. They will be indulging in step dances with the main dancer singing and the other two raising some questions which will be answered in prose and song by the balladeer. The words '*Tandana Tana, Tani Tandana*' will be very often repeated by the accompanying drummers. There are two kinds of '*Burrakathas*' on Narasimha written by Sri Kesavatheerthaswami of Sri Ramateertha Asram of Piduguralla (Guntur Dist of A.P.). One is based on Narasimha story in Potana's '*Srimadandhramahabhagavatam*', named '*Prahladavijayam*' and the second is based on the *Sthalapurana* of Mettapalli *kshetra* with reference to Machireddi (discussed while dealing Mettapalli) incident by name Mettapalli *Kshetram*. The vernacular performing arts also have a role in propagating the cult of Narasimha.

The development of Narasimha cult cannot be completed without mentioning the enormous efforts of 'Ahobalamath', which is propagating '*Narasimhatattva*' i.e. '*saranagati*' for centuries. The origin of Ahobalamath is stated that there was a young man by name Srinivasacharyulu at Melkote and was hardly 20 years of age. One day he had a strange dream, wherein Lord Narasimha appeared and instructed him to come to Ahobalam and take *sanyasa* (asceticism) and start a mission from Ahobalam. The young Srinivasacharya could not believe the vision and approached his guru Varadavisnuvaacharya, who was otherwise also called Gatikasatam Ammal and sought his instructions. As per the advice of the Guru to obey the orders of Lord

<sup>23</sup> Ibid P. 199

Narasimha, Srinivasacarya rushed to Ahobalam, where he was received by one Mukundaraya, the local Chieftain, who was also instructed by the Lord in dream to receive Srinivasacarya. Then Srinivasacarya was initiated into *sanyasa* by Lord Narasimha himself, who appeared before him in the form of a saint. After initiating *sanyasa*, Lord Narasimha gave a new name as Sathagopa Jeeyer to Srinivasacarya and disappeared. The Lord instructing him to take his *Utsavamurthy* from Ahobalam from door to door for the benefit of his devotees and administer the tradition (*sisya parampara*) under his control. The jeeyar was perplexed as to which *Utsavamurty* he has to take for his *sanchara*. He went into meditation and prayed the Lord to bring forth the *Utsavamurthy* that the Lord wished for moving from place to place. Immediately *Utsavamurty* of *Malolanarasimha* (Lakshminarasimha) came from the precincts of the temple and rested on the out stretched hands of the jeeyer. Mukundaraya and others were overwhelmed and Mukundaraya handed over all the temples which were being administered by him till then to the Ahobalamath and also arranged a palanquin and other paraphernalia for the *sanchara* of the jeer. The Ahobalamath is continuing the propagation of *Narasimhatattva* by the pontiffs of Ahobalamath till now. The Pontiffs are the hereditary trustees to all those temples of Ahobalam even today.<sup>24</sup>

The Ahobalamath thus established has the sole objective of propagating '*Narasimhatattva*' i.e., 'surrender oneself to God' (*saranagati*) and the successive Jeeyers with erudite scholarship, were making tours and giving discourses to enlighten the disciples on *Narasimhatattva*. The 7<sup>th</sup> Jeeyer Sri Satagopa Yatindra Mahadesikan, who earned the title '*Satalekhileelaghananugunakavitaduranta kavitarikakantheerava*' need to be mentioned here for his contribution in addition to the natural discourses and enlightening of the disciples.

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Dr. M.S. Raja jee, Sri Narasimha Avatara, PP 43-45.



He composed a Sanskrit drama '*Vasantika Parinayam*' which alone is a major drama available on Narasimha myth in Sanskrit literature (Chapter.V). Thus, starting from the first jeeyer till the present 45<sup>th</sup> jeeyer, Sri Ahobalamath stands for the spreading and development of Narasimha cult not only in Andhra Pradesh, but throughout the country. The Ahobalamath is establishing its branches at different cities at Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, along with Narasimha temples.

Finally, the contribution of the International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKON) is also worthy mentioning in the development of Narasimha worship. Though the special attention of ISKON is on the propagation of *Krishnatattva* in their Bhakti movement, realizing the impact of Prahlada's Bhakti in Narasimha myth, ISKON is providing separate shrines for *Prahladanarasimha* in many of their temples. For example, we find Narasimha temple at ISKON Mandirs of Bangalore, Karnataka; Mayapur (West Bengal) (Ap-II,p.6) which contain sub-shrines for *Prahladanarasimha*. The noteworthy thing to mention here is that ISKON constructed Narasimha temple at Simhacalam (not Simhacalam of A.P.) in Germany (Ap-II,p.13), crossing the boundaries of India. Similarly, the images of Narasimha can be found at Bhaktapur darbar ,Nepal and Banteay Srei, Combodia (Ap-II,p.13). Thus, it can be seen that the worship of Narasimha spread far and wide in India and abroad.

CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSION

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### CONCLUSION

The *purana* literature is a navigator for the propagation of any concept or a theory through the mythological stories. The Narasimha episode is one of the stories that have reached the masses through the *puranas*.

The Narasimha myth is found in sixteen *Puranas* including the *mahapuranas* and *Upapuranas* in addition to the *Mahabharata* and the *Harivamsa*. The *Harivamsa*, the *Padmapurana* and the *Sivapurana* contain the myth in two different places with two different versions.

The story of Narasimha slaying Hiranyakasipu, the demon king, is narrated very briefly in two or three verses in the *Aranyaparva* of the *Mahabharata* and in the fourth chapter of the *Agnipurana*. Gradually in course of time, the tale took a gigantic shape of running into about ten chapters in the *Bhagavatapurana*.

#### 1. Narasimha myth.

If one analyze the development of the episode of Narasimha through the important characters involved in it i.e. Narasimha, Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada, it would be appropriate to say that the story has assumed the final shape in different stages.

The highest motto of the Lord Vishnu, to incarnate in the form of Narasimha, is the first and foremost stage of the episode. Destroying the wicked and protecting the pious is the duty of the Lord Vishnu, who is the Absolute and the highest principle of the universe. He himself declares that he would manifest in different forms to uphold the *dharma*, whenever it declines and it is the purpose proved through his various

incarnations. Here too the Lord Vishnu appears in the anthropomorphic form of Narasimha and vanquishes the demon king Hiranyakasipu. But the reason mentioned in the *puranas* for annihilating Hiranyakasipu differs. In the beginning, the destruction of the wicked was the main reason as Hiranyakasipu was engaged in harassing celestials and monopolizing the shares of gods offered in the sacrifices and was aspiring for the overlordship of the entire Universe. In the later stage, the purpose of killing of Hiranyakasipu is mentioned as a part of his duty to protect his devotee Prahlada.

The divine and demonic qualities are just opposites by nature. When the celestials represent the former quality obviously the demons represent the latter one. Because of the racial attitude, the demons always used to wage a war against the devas and destroy the sacrificial activities of the sages and also attempted to gain power over the universe. The attitude of the demon king to shift his stand from a low pedestal to a higher and impossible ambition can be seen in this story. The *Vayupurana* refers that the demon king was aspiring only for equality with that of celestials. It is in the *Brahmandapurana* that the demon king asks and obtains in the form of boons from Brahma that he should become the enjoyer of the fruit of the sacrifices and finally he should become the Absolute itself and free from the death. On hearing from Brahma that the death is inevitable, to overcome the death, Hiranyakasipu enlists a number of quite contradictory conditions from which the death should come to him such as he should be killed by a being not created by Brahma; neither indoors nor outdoors; neither day nor night; neither wet nor dry; neither in the sky nor on the earth; neither animate nor inanimate etc. which he thinks the possible causes of the death of his imagination. This elaboration of the conditions under which he had to be killed is extensively dealt with in the remaining *puranas*.

Thus this can be seen that there are different stages in the stand of Hiranyakasipu.

The character of Prahlada played a predominant role in the development of the present version of the myth. There is no mention even the name of the character of Prahlada in the *puranas* like the *Agnipurana*, the *Vayupurana*, the *Brahmapurana*, the *Skandapurana*, the *Vishnudharmottarapurana* and the *Harivamsaparva* of *Harivamsa*. The *Brahmandapurana* refers only once the name of Prahlada as one of the sons of Hiranyakasipu and he had of no association of any sort with the killing of Hiranyakasipu.

The *Padmapurana* and the *Matsyapurana* make a mention to Prahlada as the son of Hiranyakasipu and on the command of the demon king, Prahlada fights with Narasimha and failing in his attempts and realizing that the enemy is invincible, he retreats. And in the versions of the *Kurmapurana*, the *Bhavisyaparva* of *Harivamsa*, the *Saurapurana* and the *Rudrasamhita* of *Sivapurana*, Prahlada goes on to the extent of not only declaring the enemy as an Absolute, but also advices his father to surrender to Vishnu for the benefit of the entire race. This is the point where the concept of *bhakti* has got its roots well established and the episode has gained a wide popularity. The later versions of the *puranas* have depicted the character of Prahlada as an ardent devotee of Vishnu not only by birth, but from his mother's womb. The *Narasimhapurana* and the *Bhagavatapurana* illustrate the reasons for Prahlada's undaunted devotion to Vishnu, inspite of his birth in demonic race as a son of Hiranyakasipu.

Almost all the *puranas* conclude that the wrath and the ferocity of Narasimha were subdued naturally after killing Hiranyakasipu. It is in the sixth *khanda* of the *Padmapurana*, it is stated that when his anger was not pacified in normal way, the Goddess Lakshmi made an attempt

successfully to pacify the wrath of Narasimha. It is in the *Bhagavatapurana*, when all the gods including Brahma, Siva and the Goddess Lakshmi could not dare to approach the Lord Narasimha, it is Prahlada who could pacify the anger of Narasimha with his ardent devotion and eulogies. Here too one can observe the different stages in depicting the character of Prahlada in the *puranas*.

The *Sivapurana* and the *Lingapurana* extend the Narasimha myth beyond the slaying the demon Hiranyakasipu and state that the wrath of Narasimha could not be controlled and he wanted to devour the entire universe. To save the universe, then Siva took the form of Sarabha and controlled him.

The influence of the sectarian faiths to gain the supremacy over the others can be seen in the extension of this myth. It is seen in the *Sivapurana* and the *Lingapurana*. Similar is the attempt by the Vaishnavism to get an edge over Saivism by incorporating the episode of Matriarchs created by Narasimha to control the Matriarchs of Siva, when the later failed to control them from their devastating idea of destroying all the worlds as found in the *Saurapurana*, the *Kurmapurana*, the *Matsyapurana* and the *Garudapurana*. However in both the episodes, no antagonism is expressed and in fact at the end, both complimentary to each other and vouchsafe a harmonious co-existence. Thus, the episode of the Lord Narasimha attained the present shape through different stages.

## **II. Agamic treatment of Narasimha.**

Agamas provide methodological or a systematic approach of worship of a deity. They speak two kinds of worship i.e. individual and conglomeration. Among the five-fold forms of the Almighty (the *para*, the *vyuha*, the *vibhava*, and the *antaryamin*); the last *arca* form in which the

gods reside in the idols and images is easily accessible to its devotees. Consecrating and worshipping them is the only way to attain the ultimate.

The *agamas* contain a detailed account of the different characteristics of an image. The *Vaikhanasagama* broadly classify the images of Narasimha into two groups viz. *Girija* and *Stauna*, while the former is a benign one, the other is malignant. The *Vaikhanasagamas* further enumerate and describe the different images of Narasimha as *Kevela*, *Sudarshana*, *Lakshmi*, *Patala* and *Pucchanarasimha*. The *Pancaratra*gamas describe many features but not give any nomenclatures of Narasimha images except *Varahanarasimha*. However, however it goes on enumerating different images like *Yoga/Yoganandanarasimha*, *Ugranarasimha*, *Vidarananarasimha*, *Jvalanarasimha*, *Pancamukhanarasimha* etc. The *Vihagendrasamhita* enumerates seventy four forms of Narasimha with nomenclatures, but the details of the characteristics are not described.

Among the varieties of Narasimha, the *Kevalanarasimha*, the *Lakshminarasimha*, the *Patalanarasimha*, the *Yaganandanarasimha* are treated as benign, while the *Ugranarasimha*, the *Pucchanarasimha*, the *Jvalanarasimha* and the *Vidarananarasimha* are malignant and the *Sudarshananasimha* and the *Varahanarasimha* are said to be both benign as well as malignant (benign to the devotees and malignant to the wicked). All the benign forms are grouped as the *Girija* type and the malignant forms as *Stauna* group.

Apart from the images, the *agamas* also prescribe certain other objects of worship of a particular deity concerned like that of *mantras*, *yantras*, *salagramas* etc. The *Padmasamhita* states that there are sixty four types of *Narasimhamantras*, but deals in detail with only a few. The *Nrsimhashatcakropanishad* speaks of a variety of *Yantras*. The

*Purushottamasamhitha* describes sixteen different varieties of Narasimha *salagramas*. According to Prof.S.K.Ramachander Rao, there are twenty four varieties *Narasimhasalagramas*.

### III. Temple culture and Narasimha temples.

The growing adoration and incessant faith in an admiring deity have resulted in the erection of temples or prayer halls. The *agamas* have pointed out several places like the river beds and hillocks as ideal locations for the construction of temples especially the malignant forms of deities like Narasimha and the procedures to be followed in the construction of temples and making the images to be installed in them. As a result, the conglomeration worship in the temples has become not only as a way of life, but also a means of life with a provision of number of avocations for the people living around the temple.

Starting at Ahobalam, the first and foremost abode of the Lord Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh, innumerable temples have come into existence through out the country and more popularly in South India. Various forms of Narasimha are consecrated as to the needs and faiths of the patrons and the public. The statistics data reveals that the Andhra Pradesh is credited with having not only the central place of Narasimha cult, but it contains majority of temples exclusively dedicated to the Lord Narasimha with different forms of images at sanctum sanctorum. Mainly the forms like *Lakshminarasimha*, *Yoganarasimha* are prescribed for a sanctum sanctorum and other minor forms of images were prescribed to decorate on the *vimanas*, *gopurams* and niches as a *parivaradevata*.

The specialty of Narasimha is his acceptability by all the main sects of Hinduism. It can be witnessed in finding Narasimha as a *parsvadevata* of both Vaishnava and Saiva temples. Mostly the malignant form of tearing open the entrails of the demon is seen as *parsvadevata* on *gopurams*, *vimana*, and *prakaras*.



#### **IV. Literature woven around Narasimha.**

In spite of much reverence enjoyed by the Lord Narasimha, the literature on Narasimha is not commensurate to his wide popularity. There are only three campukavyas and one drama, based on Narasimha's story are available. However there is an abundant literature of *stotras* and *stutis*, which come under *laghukavyas*. The devotional theme has attracted to compose various stotras in Sanskrit by great scholars like Sankaracarya, the great advaita philosopher and many more scholars of the vaishnavite sect have enriched the literature. Some of the selective important stotras are given at the end as appendix-1 for ready reference.

#### **V. The origin and the development of Narasimha Cult.**

The Lord Narasimha, an incarnation of Vishnu, without confining to Vaishnavites is being worshipped and revered by all irrespective of their philosophical affinities and religious attachments of the all sects of Hinduism such as *Advaita*, *Visistadvaita* and *Dvaita*. A popular folk legend in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh is that the Lord after killing Hiranyakasipu used to wander in the forest more ferociously and after meeting a tribal girl Chenchita, daughter of the tribal king of Ahobalam area, it is said he cooled down and married her. Because of this background the tribals also worship Narasimha with much reverence and consider Him as their own god. The Man-Lion concept became more acceptable as powerful as Lion that symbolizes the power. This led the rulers to patronize and propitiate the Lord Narasimha for Victory or for expanding their territory or to get rid of troubles. With the acceptance of the Lord Narasimha by all sections of the society irrespective of the caste, creed, and sects, the gradual growth of the cult through out country in general and in south India in particular because

the belief that the Lord first appeared in Ahobalam of Andhra Pradesh to kill Hiranyakasipu.

According to Stella Kramrisch, the then Indian Curator of the Philadelphia Museum, the image of Kevalanarasimha preserved in the Museum may be the earliest image known so far. It belongs 2-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. made of Mathura molted sand red stone. From the Gupta period, the cult images are virtually poured in may be because of the fact that those rulers patronized the Lord Narasimha is evident by the temples found built by them and even the last Gupta king is named after this Lord. Prof. Kalpana Desai in her work '*Iconography of Vishnu*' establishes that Narasimha worship belongs to the Gupta period by quoting several images of Narasimha found through out north India. The images of Gupta period are not only numerous but also varied from iconographical aspect. Without the strong patronization of the rulers and support to the cult by the people, this kind of variant iconographical forms might not have evolved.

A unique representation of Narasimha with five other images is found Kondamotu, Andhra Pradesh, which indicates the Pancavira worship prevalent in south India of early Bhagavata religion. This establishes that most probably this cult existed therein and before Gupta period.

There are clear evidences that this Narasimha cult was patronized by the later dynasties like the Guptas, the Vakatakas, the Kadambas, the Gangas and the Vijayanagara Empire, whose tutelary deity is Lord Narasimha. Besides these dynasties Calukyas, Hoyasalas, Pallavas and Pandyas also have patronized, which helped for the steady growth of Narasimha cult.

Yet another unique feature of Narasimha cult is its close association with the Jagannatha cult and affinity with the Saivism and the Saktism. Till today, all the rituals at Lord Jagannatha temple at Puri commences with the recitation of *Narasimhamantra*. The Sarabha episode and the story of *Lingapotanarasimha* stated in the *Vishnudharmottarapurana* indicate the affinity of Narasimha cult with the Saivism and the episode of the Matriarchs attaches this cult with the Saktism. Thus a kind of amalgamation of different cults and beliefs can be seen in this Narasimha cult through out country right from pre-Gupta period.

APPENDIX - I  
SOME IMPORTANT STORAS OF  
NARASIMHA

### १. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहगायत्री

वज्रनखाय विद्यहे तीक्ष्णद्रंष्टाय धीमहि तन्नो नारसिंह प्रचोथयात् ।

### २. श्री नृसिंहमन्त्रम्

उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।

नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥

\* \* \*

### ३. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंह सुप्रभातम्

कौसल्या सुप्रजा राम पूर्वा सन्ध्या प्रवर्तते ।

उत्तिष्ठ नरशार्दूल कर्तव्यं दैवमाह्निकम् ॥

श्रीमान् रामानुजार्यो यतिपतिरखिलांस्त्रातुकामस्वशिष्यान्

भाष्यं शारीरकार्थप्रकटनमकरोद्वाह्यसिद्धान्तभेत्ता ।

यस्तस्मिन् क्षुभ्यमाणे कथककुलवचो वज्रपातैस्सभूयः

साक्षादुत्प्रेक्ष्यमाणो भवदिति जयतात् श्रीनिवासो यतीन्द्रः ॥ १

तव सुप्रभात मरुणाब्जलोचने

तरुणेन्दुबिम्बवदनेऽधमोचने ।

शरणागतार्ति हरणाय दीक्षिते

करुणारसौघ वरुणालयेक्षिते ॥ २

तव सुप्रभातममरेन्द्रसुन्दरि  
करपल्लवात्तकलतोरुमालिनि ।  
क्षणरुक्सह स्रतुलिताङ्गसौभगे  
कनकाचितोरु मणिकुण्डलाञ्चिते ॥ ३

तव सुप्रभातमसुरारिवल्लभे निजवल्लभाङ्गसरसीसरोरुहे  
करपल्लवात्तजलजातुकुट्टमले रविकोटिभासि कुरुविन्दमौळिके ॥५

तव सुप्रभातमखिलार्तिभञ्जनि  
प्रणतार्तभक्तजनचित्तरञ्जनि ।  
वरतापनीय विदितात्मवैभव  
प्रियवक्त्रचन्द्रसुचकोरलोचने ॥ ५

देवाश्चतुर्मुख पुरंदर शङ्कराद्या  
स्सिद्धास्सनातन सनन्दन नारदाद्याः ।  
त्वामर्पितुं विविध पुष्पकराश्चरन्ति  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ ६

देवो दिवाकर इह प्रथित प्रकाशो  
दिव्यैः करैस्त्वदनघांघ्रियुगं सहस्रैः ।  
संवाहितुं भृशमुदेति हरेर्दिशायां  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ ७

वेदाश्च सामयजुदादय आविभान्ति  
शब्दैरलक्षितगुणैस्स्वगुणं स्तुवन्तः ।  
त्वल्लिङ्गनाम गुणकीर्तन लब्धभावाः ।  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ ८

विप्रास्स्वनुष्ठित गरिष्ठगुणक्रियाद्याः  
स्नाताविशुद्धमनसो विमलैर्वचोभिः ।  
त्वांस्तोतु मद्यविविधैः प्रणताश्चरन्ति  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ ९

उच्चैश्रवस्तुलित एष विभातितेश्वः  
स्तम्भेरमामदजलापुत गण्डदेशाः ।  
भृत्याश्च ते करयुगोद्धृतचामराद्याः  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १०

धेनुः पुरन्दर पुरान्तर भूषणं सा  
त्वत्किंकरत्वकरणाय धरामवाप्य ।  
त्वद्वृष्टिभावित सुधाम सुधासुधाराम्  
अकांक्षते नरहरे तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ ११

भृत्योऽहमद्य यतिरूपमुपेयिवांस्ते  
पादांबुजद्वयपरीचरणाययत्तः ।  
जागर्मि विश्वगुणनिर्मित नर्मशील  
लक्ष्मीनृकेसरिविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १२

वाराशिराजतनया नयनांबुजात  
माध्वीरसज्ञ नयनाख्यमिळिदयुग्मम् ।  
सञ्चारयाद्य विनतेषु तदीयभक्ति  
सारग्रहाय नृहरे तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १३

सह्यापंगोत्तरतरङ्गविभङ्गसङ्ग  
तुङ्गाङ्गशीतिममरुज्जडिमोत्तरङ्गे ।  
रङ्गेविहाय रुचिमत्र विराजसे त्वं  
श्रीरङ्गनायकविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १४

नारायणाद्रि पिनरद्विपुलस्रवन्ती  
निष्क्रान्तनिर्झरझळंझळगाढशब्दैः ।  
अस्पृष्टमानस इवात्र विहारकांक्षी  
त्वं भासि वेङ्कटपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १५

गोपीगृहान्तरूपकल्पितमन्थनात्  
हय्यङ्गवीनहृतकल्पित नृत्तजातम् ।  
अद्यापि तथ्यमिह कर्तुमिवासितादृथ्य-  
ग्रूपू यदूत्तविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥ १६

इत्थं रमानृहरि रङ्गधुरीणशेष  
शेलैशयादवकुलाधिप सुप्रभातम् ।  
भक्त्यापरं प्यतसुताखिल साधुभाव्यम्  
श्रीश्रीनिवासनिगमान्त यतिर्विशुद्धः ॥ १७



## ४. श्री नृसिंहस्तोत्रम्

कुन्दन्दुश्शङ्खवण कृतयुग भगवान्पद्मपुष्पप्रदाता ।  
त्रेतायां काञ्चनाभः पुनरपि समये द्वापरेरक्तवर्णः ।  
शङ्खे संप्राप्तकाले कलियुगसमये नीलमेघश्च नाभौ ।  
प्रद्योत सृष्टिकर्ता परबलदमनः पातुमां नारसिंहः ॥ १

नासाग्रं पीनगण्डं परबलमदनं बद्धकेयूरहारम् ।  
वज्रं दंष्ट्राकराळं परिमितगणनःकोटिसूर्याग्नितेजः ।  
गाम्भीर्यं पिङ्गाळाक्षं भ्रुकितितटमुखं केशकेशार्धभागम् ।  
वन्दे भीमाट्टहासं त्रिभुवनविजयः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ २

पादद्वन्द्वं धरित्र्यां पटुतरविपुलं मेरु मध्यान्हसेतुम् ।  
नाभिं ब्रह्माण्डसिन्धो हृदयमभिमुखं भूतविध्वंसनेतः ।  
आहुश्चक्रंतस्यबाहुं कुळिशनखमुखं चन्द्रसूर्याग्निनेत्रं ।  
वक्त्रं वह्न्यस्य विद्वत्सुरणगविनुतःपातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ३

घोरं भीमं महोग्रं स्फटिककुटिलता भीमपालं पलाशं ।  
चोर्ध्वं केशं प्रळयशशिमुखं वज्रदंष्ट्राकराळम् ।  
द्वात्रिंशद्बाहुयुग्मं परिखगदाशूलपाशाग्निधारम् ।  
वन्दे भीमाट्टहासं नखगुणविजयः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ४

गोकण्ठं दारुणान्तं वनवरविटपी डिडिडिडिडोटडिडिं  
डिडिं डिडिं डिडिं दहमपि दहमः झंप्रझंप्रेस्तु ।

झं प्रैः तुल्य स्तुल्य स्तुतुल्य त्रिघुघ घुम घुमां  
कुङ्कुमां कुङ्कुमंगं इत्येवं नारसिंहं ।  
वहति ककुभतः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ५

भूभृद्भूजङ्गं मकर करकर प्रज्वलज्वालमालम् ।  
खर्जन्तं खर्जखर्जं खजखजखजितं खर्जखर्जर्जयन्तम् ।  
भूभागं भोगभागं गगगगगहनं कद्रुमधृत्यकण्ठं ।  
स्वच्छं पुच्छं सुकच्छं स्वचितहितकरः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ६

झंझं झुंकारकारं जटिमटिजननं जानुरूपं जकारं ।  
हं हं हंसस्वरूपं हयशतककुभं अट्टहासं विवेशम् ।  
वंवंवं वायुवेगं सुरवरविनुतं वामनाक्षं सुरेशं ।  
लंलंलंलालिताक्षं नखगुणविजयः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ७

यं दृष्ट्वा नारसिंहं विकृतनखमुखं तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्राकराळम् ।  
पिङ्गाक्षं स्निग्धवर्णं जितवपुसदृशः कुञ्चिताग्रोग्रतेजाः ।  
भीताऽमीदानवेन्द्रास्सुरभयविनुतिशक्तिनिर्मुक्तहस्तं ।  
नासास्यं किं किमेतं क्षं वितजनकजः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ८

श्रीवत्साङ्गं त्रिनेत्रं शशिधरंधवळं चक्रहस्तं सुरेशम् ।  
वेदाङ्गवेदनादं विनुततनुविदं वेदरूपं स्वरूपम् ।  
हौंहौंहौंकारकारं हुतवहनयनं प्रज्वलजावलफालं ।  
क्षंक्षंक्षं बीजरूपं नरहरिविनुतः पातु मां नारसिंहः ॥ ९

अहोवीर्यं महो शौर्यं महाबल पराक्रमम् ।

नारसिंहं महादेवं अहोबलमहाबलम् ॥ १०

ज्वालाहोबलमालोलः क्रोडाकारं च भार्गवम् ।

योगानंदं श्चत्रवट पावनाननमूर्तये ॥ ११

श्रीमन्नृसिंह विभवे गरुडध्वजाय तापत्रयोपशमनाय भवौषधाय ।

तृष्णादिवृश्चिकजलाग्निभुजङ्गरोगक्लेशव्ययाय हरये गुरवे नमस्ते

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## ५. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंह प्रपत्तिः

श्रीश्रीनिवासाह्वय योगिवर्यम्

नारायणं योगिवरं तथैव ।

श्रीयोगिवर्यं रघुवीरवेद

कोटीरसंज्ञं गुरुमाश्रयामि ॥ १

अहोबिले गारुडशैलमध्ये

कृपावशात्कल्पितसन्निधानम् ।

लक्ष्म्यासमालिङ्गितवामभागम्

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ २

श्रीवण् शठारातियतीन्द्रमाद्यम्

प्रेम्णा स्वयं प्रेषमनुं प्रदाय ।

स्वराधने प्रेरयतिस्म यस्तम्

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ३

सर्वस्य लोकस्य समीहितानां  
प्रदानदीक्षावशतस्सदैव ।  
श्रियासमेतं श्रितदोषहंत्र्या  
लक्ष्मीसृंसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ४

यस्यायभवद्भक्तजनार्तिहन्तुः  
पितृत्वमन्येष्वविचार्यतूर्णम् ।  
स्तम्भेऽवतारस्त मनन्यलभ्यम्  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ५

यमीक्षितुं देवगणोऽतिरुष्टम्  
शत्रौ न शक्नोति चतुर्मुखादिः ।  
प्रसादितो भक्तजनेन यस्तम्  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ६

वामत्वमद्य त्यज संश्रितेषु  
नास्तीह कश्चित्किल नापराधी ।  
लक्ष्म्येति वामाङ्गयोच्यमानम्  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ७

श्रीवीरवद्राघव वेदमौलिं  
योग्निन्द्रक्लसैश्शुभतापपुण्ड्रैः  
नामादिभिः मां युतमातनोद्य  
स्तं श्रीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ८

श्रीमद्रहस्यत्रयसारपाठ

प्रारम्भकाले तव सर्वसिद्धिः ।

स्यादित्युपश्रुत्यभिधायकं मे

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

९

भाष्यप्रदानावसरे तु वीर

रघूद्वहाम्नाय य शिखार्यरूपी ।

स्वस्नागतो भाष्यमदत्त यो मे

तं श्रीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

१०

यश्श्रीनिवासाख्य मुनीन्द्रतो मां

संप्राप्तवेदान्तयुगं व्यतानीत् ।

तदर्पित स्वीकृतमद्भरं तं

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

११

स्वप्ने रमावास मुनीन्द्ररूपी

स्वयं समागत्य ममापिदेवः ।

त्रिदण्डकाषाय मदान्मुदा यः

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

१२

आराधनं स्वस्य कथं मयेति

भीतं सदा पद्मलतामुखेन ।

आश्वास्य मामप्यकरोत्कृतार्थम्

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

१३

शठारि नारायणयोगिवर्य  
पराङ्कुशस्वामि पराङ्कुशाद्यैः ।  
यः पूजितः श्रीनिधियोगिमुख्यैः  
तं श्रीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १४

नारायण श्रीरघुवीरवेद  
कोटीरनारायण मानिवासैः ।  
योगीश्वरैरन्वहमर्चितो यः  
तं श्रीनृसिंहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १५

त्वद्दत्तवाचा तव किङ्करेण  
त्वत्प्रीतिकामेन मया कृतेन ।  
स्तोत्रेण लक्ष्मीनृहरे सहिष्णुः  
प्रीतो भवत्त्वं करुणार्द्रदृष्टिः ॥ १६

पराङ्कुशाख्येन तपोधनेन  
भक्त्या नृसिंहस्य कृताप्रपत्तिः ।  
पापठ्यते येन भवेत्स तस्यपूर्णम्  
कृपापूर्णकटाक्षपात्रम् ॥ १७

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## ६. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मङ्गलाशासनम्

श्रीपराङ्कुशयोगीन्द्र शठारिप्रमुखान् गुरून् ।  
मङ्गलाशासनपरान् महिताननिशं भजे ॥ १

जगज्जन्मादिलीलाय जगदानन्दहेतवे ।	
जगच्चक्षुर्निवासाय श्रीनृसिंहाय मङ्गलम् ॥	२
हिरण्यस्तम्भसम्भूति प्रख्यातपरमात्मने ।	
प्रह्लादार्तिमुषे ज्वालानरसिंहाय मङ्गलम् ॥	३
गरुडाद्रिगुहागेहे गजकुण्टसरस्तटे ।	
हिरण्यस्थाण्वहङ्कार हारिसिंहाय मङ्गलम् ॥	४
वारिजावारितभयैर्वाणीपतिमुखैस्सुरैः ।	
महिताय महोदारमालोलायास्तुमङ्गलम् ॥	५
वराहकुण्डे मेदिन्यै पाराहर्थं प्रदायिने ।	
दन्तलग्नहिरण्याक्षदंष्ट्रसिंहाय मङ्गलम् ॥	६
गोभूहिरण्यनिर्विण्ण गोखिल ज्ञानदायिने ।	
प्रभंजन शुनासीर कारंजायास्तु मङ्गलम् ॥	७
भार्गवाख्यतपस्वीश भावनाभावितात्मने ।	
अक्षय्यतीरतीरस्थ भार्गवायास्तु मङ्गलम् ॥	८
चतुराननचेतोब्ज चित्रभानुस्वरूपिणे ।	
वेदाद्रिगह्वरस्थाय योगानन्दाय मङ्गलम् ॥	९
हाहाहूह्वाख्यगन्धर्वनृत्तगीतहृतात्मने ।	
भवहंतृतटच्छत्र वटसिंहाय मङ्गलम् ॥	१०

भारद्वाजमहायोगि महापातकहारिणे ।	
तापनीयरहस्यार्थ पावनायास्तु मङ्गळम् ॥	११
श्री शठारियतीन्द्रादियोगिहृत्पद्मभानवे ।	
सर्वत्र परिपूर्णार्थहोबिलेशाय मङ्गळम् ॥	१२
मङ्गळाशासनमिदं मानिवासमुनीरितम् ।	
महनीयं पठन् शृण्वन् मङ्गळायतसम्भवेत् ॥	१३

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### ७. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहमङ्गलम्

अपारकरुणासिन्धो निवराणपरानिमान् ।	
विदारय हिरण्याक्ष विदारणनखाय धैः ॥	१
सर्ववेदान्तवेद्याय कारणाय महात्मने ।	
सर्वलोकशरण्याय श्रीनृसिंहाय मङ्गळम् ॥	२
शेषिणे सर्ववस्तूनां वाञ्छितार्थप्रदायिने ।	
संश्रितानां सदाभूयात् श्रीनृसिंहायमङ्गळम् ॥	३
पवित्राणां पवित्राय प्रापकाय फलात्मने ।	
भद्राणामपिभद्राय श्रीनृसिंहायमङ्गळम् ॥	४
आदिवण् शठकोपाख्यैर्मुनिवर्त्यैर्महात्मभिः ।	
समर्पिताय नित्याय श्रीनृसिंहायमङ्गळम् ॥	५



जगज्जन्मादि लक्ष्म्या स्वेच्छास्वीकृतमूर्तये ।	
निध्वस्ताखिलहेयाय श्रीनृसिंहाय मङ्गळम् ॥	६
ज्ञानानन्दस्वरूपाय ज्ञानशक्त्यादि सिंधवे ।	
बन्धवे सर्वलोकानां श्रीनृसिंहाय मङ्गळम् ॥	७
कायाधवपरित्राण भावितस्थंभ जन्मने ।	
ब्रह्मेन्द्रादिस्तुतायस्यात् श्रीनृसिंहाय मङ्गळम् ॥	८
श्रीनिवासयतींद्रोक्तं लक्ष्मीनृहरि मङ्गळम् ।	
ये पठन्ति महात्मानः तेषांभूयात्तु मङ्गळम् ॥	९

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## ८. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंह पञ्चरत्नस्तोत्रम्

त्वत्प्रभु जीवप्रियमिच्छसि चेन्नरहरि पूजां कुरु सतम् प्रतिबिम्बालंकृति धृतिकुशलो बिंबालंकृतिमातनुते । चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहाऽनघ पदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥	१
शुक्तौ रजतप्रतिभा जाता कटकाद्यर्थ समर्थाचेत् दुःखमयी ते संस्कृतिरेषा निर्वृतिदाने निपुणा स्यात् । चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहाऽनघ पदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥	२
आकृतिसाम्याच्छाल्मलिकुसुमे स्थलनलिनत्वभ्रममकरोः गन्धरसाविह किमु विद्येते विफलं श्राम्यसिभूमौ विरसायाम् ।	

चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहाऽनघ पदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥	३
स्रक्चन्दनवनितादीन्विषयान्मुखदान्मत्वा तत्र विहरसे गन्धफली सदृशा ननु ते भोगानन्तर दुःखकृतस्स्युः । चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहाऽनघ पदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥	४
तव हितमेकं वचनं वक्ष्ये शृणु सुखकामो यदि सततं स्वप्ने दृष्टं सकलं हि मृषा जाग्रति च स्मर तद्वदिति । चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहाऽनघ पदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥	५

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## ९. श्री नृसिंहाद्वादश नामस्तोत्रम्

हरिः ओं । अस्यश्री नृसिंह द्वादशनाम स्तोत्र महामन्त्रस्य वेदव्यासो भगवान्  
ऋषिः । अनुष्टुप्-च्छंदः । लक्ष्मीनृसिंहो देवता । श्रीनृसिंह प्रीत्यर्थे जपे त्रिनियोगः ।

प्रथमं तु महाज्वालो द्वितीयं तूप्रकेसरी । तृतीयं वज्रदंष्ट्रश्च चतुर्थं तु विशारदः ॥	१
पंचमं नारसिंहश्च षष्ठः कश्यपमर्दनः । सप्तमो यातुहन्ता चाष्टमो देववल्लभः ॥	२
नव प्रह्लादवरदो दशमोऽनन्तहस्तकः । एकादशो महारुद्रो द्वादशो दारुणस्तथा ॥	३

द्वादशैतानि नामानि नृसिंहास्य महात्मनः ।	
मन्त्रराज इति ज्ञातं सर्वपापविनाशनम् ॥	४
क्षयापस्मारकुष्ठादि तापज्वरनिवारणम् ।	
राजद्वारे महाघोरे संग्रामे च जलान्तरे ॥	५
गिरिगह्वार अरण्ये व्याघ्र चोरामयादिषु ।	
रणे च मरणे चैव शमदं परमं शुभम् ॥	६
शतमावर्तयेद्यस्तु मुच्यते व्याधिबन्धनात् ।	
आवर्तयंत्सहस्रं तु लभते वाञ्छितं फलम् ॥	७
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### १०. नृसिंहाष्टकम्

ध्यायामि नारसिंहाख्यं ब्रह्मवेदान्तगोचरम् भवाब्धितरणोपायं शङ्खचक्रधरं पदम् नीलां रमां च परिभूय कृपारसेन स्तम्भे स्वशक्तिमनघां विनिधाय देवीम् । प्रह्लादरक्षणविधायवती कृपा ते श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥	१
इन्द्रादिदेवनिकरस्य किरीटकोटि प्रत्युत्तरत्नप्रतिबिम्बितपादपद्म । कल्पान्तकालघनगर्जनतुल्यनाद श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥	२

प्रह्लाद ईड्य प्रळयार्कसमानवक्त्र  
हुङ्कारनिर्जितनिशाचरबृन्दनाथ ।  
श्री नारदादिमुनिसङ्घसुगीयमान  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥ ३

रात्रिचराद्रिजठरात्परिसंस्थमान  
रक्तं निपीय परिकल्पितसांत्रमाल  
विद्राविताखिलसुरोग्रनृसिंहरूप  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥ ४

योगीन्द्र योगपरिरक्षक देवदेव  
दीनार्तिहरि विभवागम गीयमान ।  
मां वीक्ष्य दीनमशरण्यमगण्यशील  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥ ५

प्रह्लादशोकविनिवारण भद्रसिंह  
नक्तंचरेन्द्र मदखण्डन वीरसिंह ।  
इन्द्रादिदेवजनसन्नुतपादपद्म  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥ ६

तापत्रयाब्धि परिशोषण बाडबाग्ने  
ताराधिप प्रतिनिभानन दानवारे ।  
श्रीराजराजवरदाखिल लोकनाथ  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥ ७

ज्ञानेन केचिदवलम्ब्य पदांबुजं ते  
केचित्सुकर्मनिकरेण परे च भक्त्या ।  
मुक्तिं गताः खलु जना कृपया मुरारे  
श्रीनारसिंह परिपालय मां च भक्तम् ॥

८

नमस्ते नारसिंहाय नमस्ते मधुवैरिणे ।

नमस्ते पद्मनेत्राय नमस्ते दुःखहारिणे ॥

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## ११. श्री वेदशैलनृसिंह भुजङ्गप्रयातस्तोत्रम्

अजोमेशदेवं रजोत्कर्षवद्भू  
द्रजोलिप्तरूपो रजोद्धूतभेदम् ।  
द्विजाधीशभेदं रजोपाल हेतिम्  
भजे वेदशैलस्फुरन्नारसिंहम् ॥

१

हिरण्याक्षरक्षोवरण्याग्रजन्म  
स्थिरकूरवक्षो हर प्रौढदक्षः ।  
भृतश्री नखाग्रं परश्री सुखोग्रम्  
भजे वेदशैलस्फुरन्नारसिंहम् ॥

२

निजारम्भशुम्भद्भुजास्तम्भडम्भ  
दृढाङ्गस्रवद्रक्तसंयुक्तभूतम् ।  
निजाघावनोद्वेल लीलानुभूतम्  
भजे वेदशैलस्फुरन्नारसिंहम् ॥

३

पटुर्जन्यजास्यं स्फुटालोल धाटी

सटाझूटमृत्युर्बहीर्जनशौर्यम् ।

घटोद्धूतपद्भूद्धटस्तूयमानम्

भजे वेदशैलस्फुरन्नारसिंहम् ॥

४

पिनाक्युत्तमाङ्गं स्वनद्भङ्गरंगम्

ध्रुवाकाशरङ्गं जनश्रीपदाङ्गम् ।

पिनाकिन्यराज प्रशस्तस्तरस्तम्

भजे वेदशैलस्फुरन्नारसिंहम् ॥

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## १२. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहकरावलम्बस्तोत्रम्

श्रीमत्पयोनिधि निकेतन चक्रपाणे

भीगीन्द्रभोगमणिराजित पुण्यमूर्ते ।

योगीशशाश्वतशरण्य भवाब्धिपोत

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१

ब्रह्मेन्द्र-रुद्र-मरु-दर्ककिरीटकोटि

संघट्टिताघ्निकमलामलकान्तिकान्त

लक्ष्मीलसत्कुचसरोरुहराजहंस

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

२

संसारसागरविशालकराळकाल

नक्रग्रहग्रसननिग्रहविग्रहस्य ।

मग्नस्य रागलसदूर्मिनिपीडितस्य  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ३

संसारघोरगहने चरतो मुरारे  
मारोग्रभीकरमृगप्रवरार्धितस्य ।  
आर्तस्यमत्सरनिदाघनिपीडितस्य  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ४

संसारकूपमतिघोरमगाधमूलम्  
संप्राप्य दुःखशतसर्पसमाकुलस्य ।  
दीनस्य देव कृपया शरणागतस्य  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ५

संसार भीकरकरीन्द्रकराभिघात  
निष्पीड्यमानवपुषस्सकलार्धितस्य ।  
प्राणप्रयाण भवभीति समाकुलस्य  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ६

संसारसर्पविषदष्टभयोग्रतीव्र  
दंष्ट्राकराळविषदग्धविनष्टमूर्ते ।  
नागारिवाहन सुधाब्धि निवास! शौरै!  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ७

संसारजाल पतितस्य जगन्निवास  
सर्वेन्द्रियार्थबडिशश्च झषात्मनश्च ।

प्रोत्तंबितप्रचुरतालुकमस्तकस्य लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥	८
संसारवृक्षमघबीजम न्तकर्म शाखायुतं करणपत्रमनङ्गपुष्पम् । आरुह्य दुःखजलधौ पततो दयाळो लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥	९
संसारदावदहनाकुलभीकरोग्र ज्वालावळीभिरभिदग्धतनूरुहस्य । त्वत्पादयुग्मसरसीरुहमस्तकस्य लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥	१०
संसारसागरनिमज्जनमुह्यमानम् दीनं विलोकयविभो करुणानिधे माम् । प्रह्लादखेदपरिहार परावतार लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥	११
संसारयूथ गजसंहतिसिंहदंष्ट्रा भीतस्य दुष्टमतिदैत्य भयङ्करेण । प्राणप्रयाण भवभीति निवारणेन लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥	१२
संसारयोगसकलेप्सितनित्यकर्म संप्राप्यदुःख सकलेन्द्रियमृत्युनाश ।	



संक्कल्पसिन्धुतनयाकुचकुङ्कुमाङ्क!

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१३

भद्राकशैर्यनुभटाबहुभर्तृयन्ति

कर्षन्ति यत्र पथि पाशशतै र्यथामाम् ।

एकाकिनं परवशं चकितं दयाळो

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१४

अन्धस्य मे हतविवेकमहाधनस्य

चोरैर्महाबलिभिरिन्द्रियनामधेयैः ।

मोहान्धकारकुहरे विनिपातितस्य

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१५

लक्ष्मीपते कमलनाभ सुरेश विष्णो

यज्ञेश यज्ञ मधुसूदन विश्वरूप! ।

ब्रह्मण्य केशव जनार्दन वासुदेव

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१६

प्रह्लाद-नारद-पराशर-पुण्डरीक

व्यासाम्बरीष शुकशौनक हृन्निवास ! ।

भक्तानुरक्तपरिपालनपारिजात !

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

१७

एकेन चक्रमपरेण करेणशङ्ख

मन्येनसिन्धुतनयामवलम्ब्य तिष्ठन् ।

वामेतरेण वरदाभयहस्तमुद्राम् ।  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ १८

आद्यन्तशून्यमजमव्ययमप्रमेय-  
मादित्यरुद्रनिगमादिनुतप्रभावम् ।  
त्वाम्भोधिजास्य मधुलोलुपमत्तभृङ्गी  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ १९

वाराह-राम-नरसिंह-रमादिकान्ता  
क्रीडाविलोलविधिशूलिसुरप्रवन्द्य ! ।  
हंसात्मकं परमहंस विहारलीलम्  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ २०

स्वामी नृसिंहः सकलं नृसिंहः  
माता नृसिंहश्च पिता नृसिंहः ।  
भ्राता नृसिंहश्च सखा नृसिंहः  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ २१

प्रह्लादमानससरोजविहाभृङ्ग !  
गङ्गातरङ्गधवळाङ्ग रमास्थिताङ्ग ! ।  
शृङ्गार सुन्दरकिरीटलसद्वराङ्ग  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ २२

श्री शङ्करार्य रचितं सततं मनुष्यः  
स्तोत्रं पठेदिह तु सर्वगुणप्रपन्नम् ।

सद्योविमुक्तकलुषो मुनिवर्यगण्यो  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ २३

यन्माययार्जित वपुः प्रचुरप्रवाह  
मग्नार्तनिवहेषु करावलम्बम् ।  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहचरणाब्जमधुव्रतेन  
स्तोत्रं कृतं सुखकरं भुवि शङ्करेण ॥ २४

श्रीमन्नृसिंह विभवे गरुडध्वजाय  
तापत्रयोपशमनाय भवौषधाय ।  
तृष्णादिवृश्चिक-जलाग्नि-भुजङ्ग-रोग  
क्लेशव्ययाम हरये गुरवे नमस्ते ॥ २५

इति श्रीमच्छङ्काराचार्य विरचितं श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंहकरावलम्बस्तोत्रं समाप्तम् ।

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### १३. ऋणविमोचन नृसिंहस्तोत्रम्

देवकार्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं सभास्तम्भसमुद्भवम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ १

लक्ष्मालिङ्गितवामाङ्गं भक्तानां वरदायकम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ २

अन्त्रा मालाधरं शङ्खचक्राद्यायुधधारिणम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ३

स्मरणात् सर्वपापघ्नं कद्रूज विषनाशनम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ४

सिंहनादेन महता दिग्दंतिभयनाशनम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ५

प्रह्लादवरदं श्रीशं दैत्येश्वरविदारणम्

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ६

क्रूरग्रहैः पीडितानां भक्तानां अभयप्रदम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ७

वेदवेदान्तयज्ञेशं ब्रह्मरुद्रादिवन्दितम् ।

श्रीनृसिंहमहावीरं नमामि ऋणमुक्तये ॥ ८

य इदं पठते नित्यं ऋणमोचनसंज्ञितम् ।

अनृणी जायते सद्यः धनम् शीघ्रंमवाप्नुयात् ॥ ९

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### १४. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाष्टोत्तरशतनामस्तोत्रम्

नारसिंहो महासिंहो दिव्यसिंहो महाबलः ।

उग्रसिंहो महादेवस्तंभजश्चोग्रलोचनः ॥ १

रौद्रस्सर्वाद्भुतश्रीमान्योगानन्दसि क्रमः ।

हरिः कोलाहलश्चक्री विजयी जयवर्धनः ॥ २

पञ्चाननः परंब्रह्म चाघोरो घोरविक्रमः ।	
ज्वलन्मुखो ज्वालमाली महाज्वालो महाप्रभुः ॥	३
नितलाक्षस्सहस्राक्षो दुर्निरीक्षः प्रतापनः ।	
महादंष्ट्रायुधः प्राज्ञश्चण्डकोपी सदाशिवः ॥	४
हिरण्यकशिपुध्वंसी दैत्यदानवभञ्जनः ।	
गुणभद्रो महाभद्रो बलभद्रस्सुभद्रकः ॥	५
कराळो विकराळश्च विकर्ता सर्वकर्तृकः ।	
शिशुमारस्त्रिलोकात्म ईशस्सर्वेश्वरो विभुः ॥	६
भैरवाडम्बरो दिव्यश्चात्युतः कविमाधवः ।	
अधोक्षजोऽक्षरशर्वो वनमाली वरप्रदः ॥	७
विश्वंभरोऽद्भुतो भव्यः श्रीविष्णु पुरुषोत्तमः ।	
अनघास्त्रोनरवास्त्रश्च सूर्यज्योतिस्सुरेश्वरः ॥	८
सहस्रबाहुस्सर्वज्ञस्सर्वसिद्धिप्रदायकः ।	
वज्रदंष्ट्रो वज्रनखो महानन्दः परन्तपः ॥	९
सर्वमन्त्रैकरूपश्च सर्वयन्त्रविदारणः ।	
सर्वतन्त्रात्मकोऽव्यक्तस्सुव्यक्तो भक्तवत्सलः ॥	१०
वैशाखशुक्लभूतोत्थश्शरणागतवत्सलः ।	
उदारकीर्तिः पुण्यात्म महात्मा चण्डविक्रमः ॥	११

वेदत्रयप्रपूज्यश्च भगवान्परमेश्वरः ।	
श्रीवत्साङ्गश्रीनिवासो जगद्व्यापी जगन्मयः ॥	१२
जगत्पालो जगन्नाथो महाकायो द्विरूपभृत् ।	
परमात्मा परंज्योति निर्गुणश्च नृकेसरी ॥	१३
परतत्त्वं परंधाम सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ।	
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहस्सर्वत्मा धीरः प्रह्लादपालकः ॥	१४
इदं श्रीमन्नृसिंहस्य नाम्नामष्टोत्तरं शतम् ।	
त्रिसन्ध्यं यः पठेद्भक्त्या सर्वाभीष्टमवाप्नुयात् ॥	१५
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### १५. श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहसहस्रनामस्तोत्रम्

मार्कण्डेय उवाच :

एवं युद्धमभूद्धोरं रौद्रं दैत्यबलैस्सह ।	
नृसिंहस्याङ्गसम्भूतैर्नारसिंहैरनेकशः ॥	१
दैत्याः कोट्याहतास्तत्र केचिद्धीताः पलायिताः ।	
तं दृष्ट्वाऽरिवधं क्रुद्धो हिरण्यकशिपुस्स्वयम् ॥	२
भूतपूर्वैरमृत्युर्म इति ब्रह्मवरोद्धतः ।	
प्रवर्ष शरवर्षेण नारसिंहं भृशं बली ॥	३
द्वन्द्वयुद्धमभूदुग्रं दिव्यवर्षसहस्रकम् ।	
दैत्येन्द्रसाहसं दृष्ट्वा देवा इन्द्र पुरोगमाः ॥	४

श्रेयः कस्य भवेदत्र इति चिन्तापरा भवन् ।	
तदा कृद्धोनृसिंहश्च दैत्येन्द्रप्रहितान्युधि ॥	५
विष्णुचक्रं महाचक्रं कालचक्रं च वैष्णवम् ।	
रौद्रं पाशुपतं ब्राह्मं कौबेरं कुलिशानिलम् ॥	६
आग्नेयं वारुणं सौम्यं मोहनं चैव पार्वतम् ।	
भार्गवादि बहून्यस्त्राण्यभक्षयत कोपनः ॥	७
ततः खड्गधरं दैत्यं जग्राह नरकेसरी ।	
सन्ध्याकाले सभाद्वारे स्वाङ्के निक्षिप्य भैरवम् ॥	८
हिरण्यकशिपोर्वक्षो विदार्यातीवरोषितः ।	
उद्धृत्य चान्त्रमाल्यानि नखैर्वज्रसमप्रभैः ॥	९
मेने कृतार्थमात्मानं सर्वतः पर्यवैक्षत ।	
तर्पिता देवतास्सर्वाः पुष्पवृष्टिमवाकिरन् ॥	१०
देवदुन्दुभयो नेदुः दिशश्च विमलाऽभवन् ।	
नृसिंहमतितेजस्कं विकीर्णं वदनं भृशम् ॥	११
लेलिहानं च गर्जन्तं कालानलसमप्रभम् ।	
अतिरौद्रं महाकायं महादंष्ट्रं महाभुजम् ॥	१२
महाजिह्वं महारूपं दृष्ट्वा संक्षोभितं जगम् ।	
सर्वदेवगणैस्सार्धं तत्रागत्य पितामहः ॥	१३

आगन्तुकैर्भूतपूर्वैर्वर्तमानैरनुत्तमैः ।

गुणैर्नामसहस्रेण तुष्टाव श्रुतिसम्मितैः ॥

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ओम् नमश्श्रीमदिव्यलक्ष्मिर्नृसिंहायेति ज्ञानमुद्रांविधाय ओम् यम् यम् ओम् वम्  
वम् रम् रम् ओम् लम् लम् इति बीजानि जपित्वा । अस्य श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहदिव्य-  
सहस्रनामस्तोत्रमहामन्त्रस्य ब्रह्म ऋषिः, अनुष्टुप् छन्दः, श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहो देवता, क्षौम् इति  
बीजम् । श्रीम् इति शक्तिः, नखदंष्ट्रायुधायेति कीलकम् । मन्त्रराज श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंहप्रीत्यर्थे  
जपे विनियोगः ।

**करन्यासः**

श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाय अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः, वज्रनखाय तर्जनीभ्यां नमः महारौद्राय  
मध्यमाभ्यां नमः, सर्वतोमुखाय अनामिकाभ्यां नमः विकटास्याय कनिष्ठकाभ्यां नमः वीराय  
करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः ।

**अङ्गन्यासः**

ओम् लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाय हृदयाय नमः वज्रनखाय शिरसे स्वाहा । महारौद्राय शिखायै  
वषट् । सर्वतोमुखाय कवचाय हुं । विकटास्याय नेत्राभ्यां वौषट् । ओम् वीर्यास्याय फट् ।

**दिग्बन्धेः**

भूर्भुवस्सुवरोमिति दिग्बन्धः । ओम् ऐन्द्रीं दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओम् नमश्चक्राय  
स्वाहा । ओं अग्रेयां दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्रायस्वाहा । ओं नैऋतिदिशं  
सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं वारुणी दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं  
नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं वायवीन्दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं



कौबेरिदिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं ऐशानीं दिशं सुदर्शनेन  
 बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं ऊर्ध्वा दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय  
 स्वाहा । ओं अधस्तां दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्राय स्वाहा । ओं अंतरिक्ष  
 दिशं सुदर्शनेन बध्नामि । ओं नमश्चक्रायस्वाहा ।

**ध्यानम् :**

सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूपममलं क्षीराब्धिमध्यस्थितम्  
 योगारूढमतिप्रसन्नवदनं भूषासहस्रोच्चलम् ।  
 त्र्यक्ष्यं-चक्र-पिनाकाभयकरान्विभ्राणमर्कच्छविम्  
 छत्रीभूतफणीन्द्रमिन्दुधवलं लक्ष्मी सिंहं भजे ॥ १

लक्ष्मीचारुकुचद्वन्द्व कुङ्कुमाङ्कितवक्षसे  
 नमो नृसिंहनाथाय सर्वमङ्गलमूर्तये ॥ २

उपास्महे नृसिंहाख्यं ब्रह्मवेदान्तगोचरम् ।  
 भूयोऽल्लासितसंसारच्छेद हेतुं जगदुरुम् ॥ ३

**ब्रह्मोवाच :**

ओम् नमो नारसिंहाय वज्रदंष्ट्राय वज्रिणे ।  
 वज्रदेहाय वज्राय नमो वज्रनखाय च ॥ १

वासुदेवाय वन्द्याय वरदाय वरात्मने ।  
 वरदाऽभयहस्ताय वराहवररूपिणे ॥ २

वरेण्याय वरिष्ठाय श्रीवराय नमोनमः ।  
 प्रह्लादवरदायैव प्रत्यक्षवरदाय च ॥ ३

परात्पराय पाराय पवित्राय पिनाकिने ।  
 पावनाय प्रसन्नाय पाशिने पापहारिणे ॥ ४

पुरुष्टुताय पुण्याय पुरुहूताय ते नमः ।	
तत्पूरुषाय तथ्याय पुराणपुरुषाय च ॥	५
पुरोधसे पूर्वजाय पुष्कराक्षाय ते नमः ।	
पुष्पहासाय हासाय महाहासाय शारिङ्गिणे ॥	६
सिंहराजाय सिंहाय जगद्वन्द्याय ते नमः ।	
अट्टहासाय रोषाय ज्वालाहासाय ते नमः ॥	७
भूतावासाय भासाय श्रीनिवासाय खड्गिणे ।	
खड्गजिह्वाय सिंहाय खड्गवासाय ते नमः ॥	८
नमो मूलाधिवासाय धर्मवासाय (धर्मिणे) धन्विने ।	
धनंजयाय धन्याय नमो मृत्युञ्जयाय च ॥	९
शुभञ्जमायसूत्राय नमश्शत्रुंजयाय च ।	
निरञ्जनाय वीराय निर्गुणाय गुणात्मने ॥	१०
निष्प्रपञ्चाय निर्वाणप्रदाय निबिडाय च ।	
निरालम्बाय नीलाय निष्कलाय कलात्मने ॥	११
निमेषाय निबन्धाय निमेषगमनाय च ।	
निर्द्वन्द्वाय निराशाय निश्चयाय निजाय च ॥	१२
निर्मलाय निदानाय निर्मोहाय निराकृते ।	
नमो नित्याय सत्याय सत्कर्मनिरताय च ॥	१३
सत्यध्वजाय मुञ्जाय मुञ्जकेशाय केशिने ।	
हरिकेशाय केशाय गुडाकेशाय वै नमः ॥	१४

सुकेशायोर्ध्वकेशाय केशिसंहारकाय च ।	
जलेशाय स्थलेशाय पद्मेशायोग्ररूपिणे ॥	१५
पुष्पेशाय कुलेशाय केशवाय नमो नमः ।	
सूक्तिकर्णाय सूक्ताय रक्तजिह्वाय रागिणे ॥	१६
दीप्तरूपाय दीप्ताय प्रदीप्ताय प्रलोभिने ।	
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 नमो नमस्ते नरसिंहरूप नमोनमस्ते रणसिंहरूप!  
 नमो नमस्ते गुरुसिंहरूप नमो नमस्ते लघुसिंहरूप ।

### उत्तर भागम्

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मार्कण्डेय उवाच :

दृष्ट्वा तु देवतास्सर्वाः श्रुत्वा तांब्रह्मणो गिरम् । स्तोत्रेणानेन संतुष्टस्सौम्यधावमधारयत् ॥	७
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अनुकूला भवेद्भार्या लोकैश्च परिपूज्यते ।	
सुपुत्रान् धनधान्यं च पशूश्च विविधानपि ॥	२२
एतत्सर्वमवाप्नोति नृसिंहस्य प्रसादतः ।	
जलसन्तरणे चैव पर्वतारोहणे तथा ॥	२३
वनेपि विचर स्मृत्यो व्याघ्रादि विषमे पथि ।	
बिलप्रवेशे पाताले नारसिंहमनुस्मरेत् ॥	२४
ब्रह्मघ्नश्च पशुघ्नश्च भ्रूणहा गुरुतल्पगः ।	
मुच्यते सर्वपापभ्यो कृतघ्नः स्त्रीविघातकः ॥	२५
वेदानां दूषकश्चापि मातापितृविनिन्दकः ।	
असत्यस्तु सदा यज्ञनिन्दको लोकनिन्दकः ॥	२६

स्मृत्वा सकृन्नृसिंहं तु मुच्यते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।	
बहुनात्र किमुक्तेन स्मृत्वा तं शुद्धमानसः ॥	२७
यत्र यत्र चरेन्मर्त्यः नृसिंहस्तत्र गच्छति ।	
गच्छंस्तिष्ठन्स्वपन् मर्त्यः जाग्रच्छापि ग्रसन्नपि ॥२८	
नृसिंहेति नृसिंहेति नृसिंहेति सदा स्मरन् ।	
पुमान्नलिप्यिते पापैर्भुक्तिं मुक्तिं च विन्दति ॥	२९
नारि सुभगता मेति सौभाग्यं च सुरूपताम् ।	
भर्तुः प्रियत्वं लभते न वैधव्यं च विन्दति ॥	३०
न सपत्नीं च जन्मान्ते सम्यक् ज्ञानी द्विजो भवेत् ।	
भूमिप्रदक्षिणान्मर्त्यो यत्फलं लभते चिरात् ॥	३१
तत्फलं लभते नारसिंहमूर्तिप्रदक्षिणात् ।	
इत्युक्त्वा देवदेवेशो लक्ष्मिमालिङ्ग्य लीलया ॥	३२
प्रह्लादस्याभिषेकस्तु ब्रह्मणे चोपदिष्टवान् ।	
श्रीशैलस्य प्रदेशे तु लोकानां हितकाम्यया ॥	३३
स्वरूपं स्थापयामान प्रकीर्तिस्थोऽभवत्तदा ।	
ब्रह्मापि दैत्यराजानं प्रह्लादमभिषिच्य च ॥	३४
दैवतैस्सह सुप्रीतो ह्यात्मलोकं ययौ स्वयम् ।	
हिरण्यकशिपोर्भित्या प्रपलाय शचीपतिः ॥	३५
स्वर्गराज्यात्परिभ्रष्टो युगानामेकसप्ततिः ।	
नृसिंहेन हते दैत्ये तदा स्वर्गमवाप सः ॥	३६

दिक्पालकाशच संप्राप्ताः स्वं स्वं स्थानमनुत्तम् ।	
धर्मे मतिस्समस्तानां जनानामभवत्तदा ॥	३७
एतन्नाम सहस्रं तु ब्रह्मणा निर्मितं पुरा ।	
पुत्रानध्यापयामास सनकादीन्महामुनीन् ॥	३८
ऊचुस्तेच ततस्सर्वे लोकानां हितकाम्यया ।	
देवता ऋषयस्सिद्धाः यक्षविद्याधरोगाः ॥	३९
गन्धर्वाश्च मनुष्याश्च इहामुत्रफलैषिणः ।	
अस्य स्तोत्रिस्य पठनात् विशुद्धमनसोऽभवन् ॥	४०
सनत्कुमारात्संप्राप्तो भरद्वाजो मुनिस्तदा ।	
तस्मादाङ्गीरसः प्राप्तः तस्मात्प्राप्तो महामतिः ॥	४१
जग्राह भार्गवस्तस्मादग्निमित्राय सोऽब्रवीत् ।	
जैगीषव्याय स प्राह ऋतुकर्णाय संयमी ॥	४२
विष्णुमित्राय स प्राह सोऽब्रवीच्च्यवनाय च ।	
तस्मादवाप शाण्डिल्यो गर्गाय प्राह वै मुनिः ॥	४३
ऋतु जयाय स प्राह सोऽपि बोधयनाय च ।	
क्रमात्स विष्णवे प्राह सप्राहो द्दामकुक्षये ॥	४४
सिंहतेजास्तु तस्माच्छ श्रीप्रियाय ददौ च सः ।	
उपदिष्टोस्म्यहं तस्मादिदं नाम सहस्रकम् ॥	४५
तत्प्रसादादमृत्युर्मे यस्मात्कस्माद्भयं न च ।	
मया च कथितं नारसिंहस्तोत्रमिदं तव ॥	४६

त्वं हि नित्यं शुचिर्भूत्वा तमाराधाय शाश्वतम् ।	
सर्वभूताश्रयं देवं नृसिंहं भक्तवत्सलम् ॥	४७
पूजायित्वा स्तवं जप्त्वा हुत्वा निश्चलमानसः ।	
प्राप्नुषे महतीं सिद्धिं सर्वान्कामान्नरोत्तम ॥	४८
अयमेव परो धर्मः इदमेव परन्तपः ।	
इदमेव परं ज्ञानं इदमेव महद्ब्रतम् ॥	४९
अयमेव सदाचारः अयमेव महामुखः ।	
इदमेव त्रयो वेदाश्शास्त्रा ण्यागमनानि च ॥	५०
यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न तत्कचित् ।	
कथितं नारसिंहस्य चरितं पापनाशनम् ॥	५१
सर्वमन्त्रमयं तापत्रयोपशमनं परम् ।	
सर्वार्थसाधनं दिव्यं किम्भूयश्श्रोतुमिच्छसि ॥	५२

ओम् नम इति। इति श्रीमन्नरसिंहपुराणे स्तोत्ररत्नाकरे श्री नरसिंहप्रादुर्भावे  
अपदुद्धारघोरवीरलक्ष्मीनृसिंह दिव्यसहस्रनामस्तोत्रमन्त्रराजस्सर्वार्थसाधनरूपः  
द्विशततमोऽध्यायः ।

\* \* \*

### १६. श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंह कवचम्

नृसिंहकवचं वक्ष्ये प्रह्लादेनोदितं पुरा ।	
सर्वरक्षाकरं पुण्यं सर्वोपद्रवनाशनम् ॥	१
सर्वसंपत्करं चैव स्वर्गमोक्षप्रदायकम् ।	
ध्यात्वा नृसिंहदेवेशं हेमसिंहासनस्थितम् ॥	२

विवृतास्यं त्रिनयनं शरदिदुसमप्रभम् ।	
लक्ष्म्यालिङ्गितवामाङ्गं विभूतिभिरुपाश्रितम् ॥	३
चतुर्भुजं कोमलाङ्गं स्वर्णकुण्डलशोभितम् ।	
उरोजशोभितोरस्कं रत्नकेयूरमुद्रितम् ॥	४
तप्तकाञ्चनसङ्काशं पीतनिर्मलवाससम् ।	
इन्द्रादिसुरमौलिस्थ स्फुरन्माणिक्यदीप्तिभिः ॥	५
विराजितपदद्वन्द्वं शङ्खचक्रादिहेतिभिः ।	
गरुत्मता सविनयं स्तूयमानं मुदान्वितम् ॥	६
स्वहृत्कमलसंवासं कृत्वा तु कवचं पठेत् ।	
नृसिंहो मे शिरः पातु लोकरक्षात्मसम्भवः ॥	७
सर्वगोपि स्तम्भवासः फालं मे रक्षतु ध्वनिम् ।	
नृसिंहो मे दृशौ पातु सोमसूर्याग्निलोचनः ॥	८
स्मृतिं मे पातु नृहरिर्मुनिवर्यं स्तुतिप्रियः ।	
नासां मे सिंहनासस्तु मुखं लक्ष्मीमुखप्रियः ॥	९
सर्वविद्याधिपः पातु नृसिंहो रसनां मम ।	
वक्त्रं पात्विन्दुवदनस्सदा प्रह्लादवन्दितः ॥	१०
नृसिंहः पातु मे कण्ठं स्कंधौ भूभरणांतकृत् ।	
दिव्यास्त्रशोभितभुजो नृसिंहः पातुः मे भुजौ ॥	११



करौ मे देववरदो नृसिंहः पातु सर्वतः ।	
हृदयं योगिसौघं च निवासं पातु मे हरिः ॥	१२
मध्यं पातु हिरण्याक्षवक्षःकुक्षिविदारणः ।	
नाभि मे पातु नृहरिस्स्वनाभि ब्रह्मसंस्तुतः ॥	१३
ब्रह्माण्डकोटयः कट्यां यस्यासौ पातु मे कटिम् ।	
गुह्यं मे पातु गुह्यानां मन्त्राणां गुह्यरूपधृत् ॥	१४
ऊरू मनोभवः पातु जानुनी नररूपधृत् ।	
जङ्घे पातु धराभारहर्ता योऽसौ नृकेसरी ॥	१५
सुरराज्यप्रदः पातु पादौ मे नृहरीश्वरः ।	
सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः पातु मे सर्वशस्तमम् ॥	१६
महोग्रः पूर्वतः पातु महावीराग्रजोऽग्रितः ।	
महाविष्णुर्दीक्षिणे तु महाज्वालस्तुनैर्ऋतौ ॥	१७
पश्चिमे पातु सर्वेशो दिशि मे सर्वतोमुखः ।	
नृसिंहः पातु वायव्यां सौम्यां भूषणविग्रहः ॥	१८
ईशान्यां पातु भद्रो मे सर्वमङ्गलदायकः ।	
संसारभयदः पातु मृत्यो मृत्युर्नृकेसरी ॥	१९
इदं नृसिंह कवचं प्रह्लादमुखमण्डितम् ।	
भक्तिमान्यः पठेन्नित्यं सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥	२०

पुत्रवान् धनवान् लोके दीर्घायुरुपजायते ।	
यं यं कामयते कामं तं तं प्राप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥	२१
सर्वत्र जयमाप्नोति सर्वत्र विजयी भवेत् ।	
भूम्यन्तरिक्ष दिव्यानां ग्रहानां विनिवारणम् ॥	२२
वृश्चिकोरगसम्भूतविषापहरणं परम् ।	
ब्रह्मराक्षसयक्षाणां दूरोत्सारणकारणम् ॥	२३
भूर्जे वा ताळपत्रे वा कवचं लिखितं शुभम् ।	
करमूले धृतं येन सिद्ध्येयुः सर्वसिद्धयः ॥	२४
देवासुरमनुष्येषु स्वं स्वमेव जयं लभेत् ।	
एकसन्ध्यं त्रिसन्ध्यं वा यः पठेन्नियतो नरः ॥	२५
सर्वमङ्गलमाङ्गल्यं भुक्तिं मुक्तिं च विन्दति ।	
द्वात्रिंशति सहस्राणि पठेच्छुद्धात्मनां नृणाम् ॥	२६
कवचस्यास्य मन्त्रस्य मन्त्रसिद्धिः प्रजायते ।	
अनेन मन्त्रराजेन कृत्वा भस्माभिमन्त्रणम् ॥	२७
तिलकं विन्यसेद्यस्तु तस्य ग्रहभयं हरेत् ।	
त्रिवारं जपमानस्तु दत्तं वार्यभिमन्त्र्य च ॥	२८
प्राशयेद्यो नरो मन्त्रं नृसिंहध्यानमाचरेत् ।	
तस्य रोगाः प्रणश्यन्ति ये च स्युः कुक्षिसम्भवाः ॥	२९

किमत्र बहुनोक्तेन नृसिंहसदृशो भवेत् ।

मनसा चिन्तितं यत्तु स तच्चाप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥ ३०

गर्जन्तं गर्जयन्तं निजभुजपटलं स्फोटयन्तं हटन्तम्

रूप्यन्तं तापयन्तं दिविभुवि दितिजं क्षेपयन्तं क्षिपन्तम् ।

क्रदन्तं रोषयन्तं दिशिदिशि सततं संहरन्तं भरन्तम्

वीक्षन्तं घूर्णयन्तं शरनिकरशतैर्दिव्यसिंहं नमामि ॥ ३१

(श्री ब्रह्माण्डपुराणान्तर्गत श्री लक्ष्मीनृसिंहकवचम् समप्तम् )

\* \* \*

APPENDIX - II  
SOME PHOTOGRAPHS OF  
NARASIMHA

*APPENDIX II*

Nava Narasimha Kshetram - Ahobilam



Sri Jwala



Sri Ahobila



Sri Maalola



Sri Pavana



Sri Yogaananda



Sri Kroda



Sri Chatravata

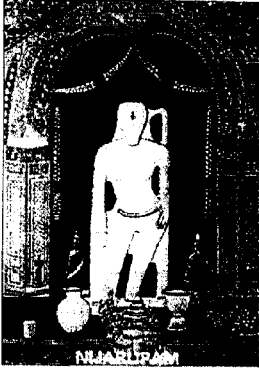


Sri Bhargava



Sri Karanja

Courtesy to Dr. M.S. Rajajee I.A.S. (Retd), SRI NARASIMHA AVATARA



Lord Varaaha Narasimha  
Simhaachalam



Lord Narasimha, Yaadgirigutta



Lord Narasimha, Mangalagiri



Lord Narasimha, Vedaadri



Lord Narasimha, Mattappalli

Courtesy to Dr. M.S. Rajajee I.A.S. (Retd), SRI NARASIMHA AVATARA



Lord Narasimha, Vadapalli



Lord Narasimha, Sholinghur

Lord Narasimha, Namakkal



Lord Narasimha, Thiruvallikeni



Courtesy to Dr. M.S. Rajajee I.A.S. (Retd), SRI NARASIMHA AVATARA

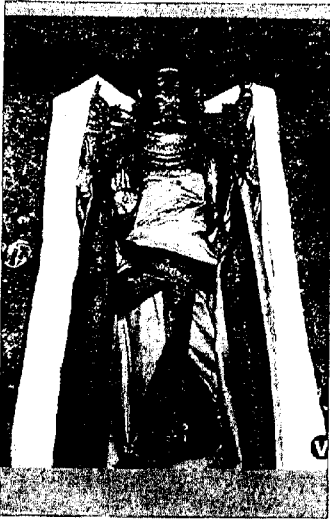


Lord Narasimha  
Thiruvellukai



Lord Narasimha  
Thiruvaali

Lord Narasimha  
Thirukkoshthiyoor



Lord Yoga Narasimha  
Kondirajupalem



Courtesy to Dr. M.S. Rajajee I.A.S. (Retd), SRI NARASIMHA AVATARA





Lord Narasimha  
Singaperumaal Koil



Lord Narasimha, Srirangam



Sri Chakkarathalwar



Sri Narasimhar

Thirumohur

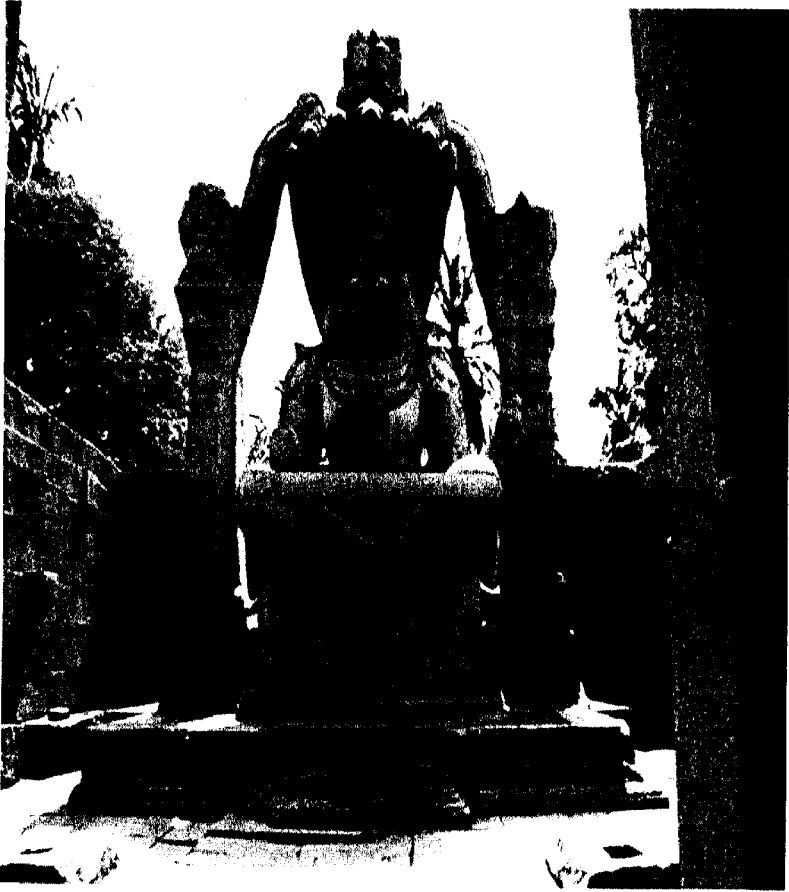
Courtesy to Dr. M.S. Rajajee I.A.S. (Retd), SRI NARASIMHA AVATARA



Sri Gandabherunda Narasimha, Srirangam



Lord Narasimha, Mayapur



Ugra Narasimha Statue, Hampi, Karnataka, India



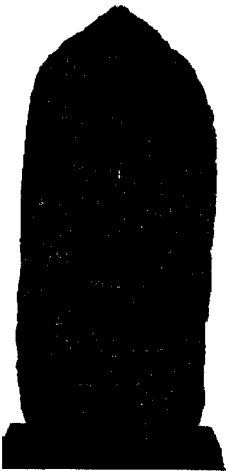
Pacific Asia  
Museum collection.



Katimari Collection



Pacific Asia  
Museum collection.

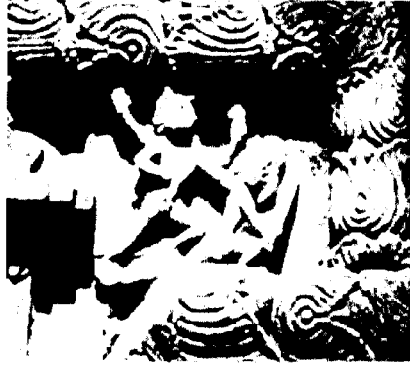


Rubin Museum of  
Arts collection.



Rubin Museum of  
Arts collection.

Courtesy to: Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation & Himalayan  
Arts Academy



Courtesy to Philadelphia Museum



Narasimha Statue



Badami Cave III, Karnataka, India



Halebid, Karnataka, India



Wall Painting at Panayannar Kaavu  
(Temple), Kerala, India



Tanjore Painting, Tamil Nadu, India



Water Colour Painting, Himachal Pradesh, India.



Kalamkari Painting, India



Orissan Pata-Chitra Painting, India





Narasimha Claws Hiranyakasipu,  
Bhaktapur Darbar, Nepal



Prahlada Narasimha Temple,  
Simhachalam, Germany



Narasimha Claws Hiranyakasipu, Banteay Srei, Cambodia



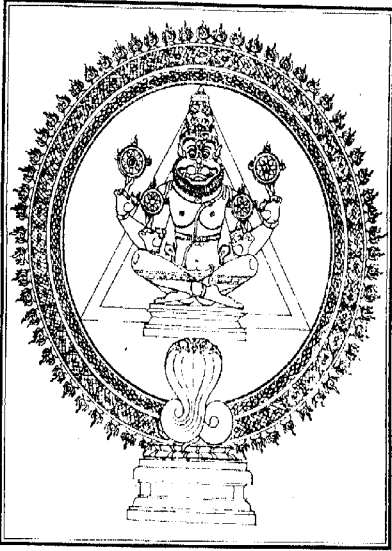
Narasimha Sculpture, Jalakanteshwara Temple, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India



Narasimha Sculpture, Jalakanteshwara Temple, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India



Narasimha Sculpture, Kailasanatha Temple, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India



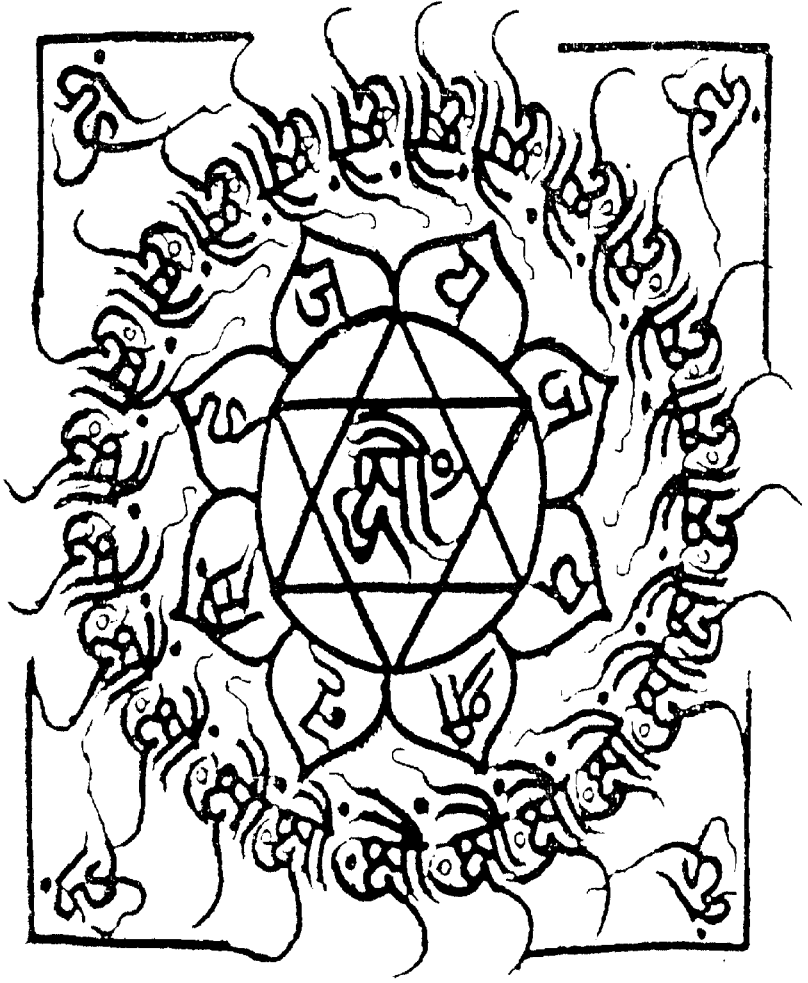
Sri Yoga Narasimhar



Sri Sudarsana Narasimhar



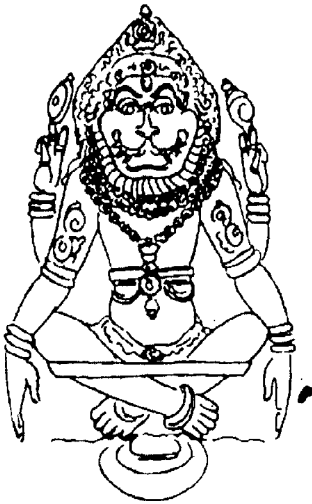
Metal Image of Narasimha, Madras Museum



NARASIMHA-YANTRA



NARASIMHA from Sarangapani temple Kumbhakonam



YOGA-NARASIMHA (as Vimana-devata)



NRTYA NARASIMHA (from Teerthapada temple)

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